

Anani to visit Israel today

AMMAN (Petra) — Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani will visit Israel today for talks with Israeli President Ezer Weizman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, according to an official announcement. The talks will deal with issues pertaining to the Wye River peace deal signed between Israel and PNA. Anani will also discuss with the Israeli officials bilateral economic relations between Jordan and Israel on the one hand and Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority on the other.

Jordan Times

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King receives call from Arafat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Tuesday received a telephone call from Palestinian President Yasser Arafat who inquired about the King's health and progress of his treatment, wishing him a safe return home. Arafat briefed the King on the latest developments in the peace process and obstacles impeding the implementation of peace agreements. His Majesty stressed the need to resume Palestinian-Israeli dialogue and for the implementation of the Wye River peace agreement reached between the two sides recently.

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Iraq wants diplomatic solution to crisis

Clinton reviews Iraq options; Cohen orders ship movements

Agencies

IRAQ SAID Tuesday it wants a diplomatic solution to the crisis over U.N. arms inspections but warned it will not bow to U.S. threats of force, as Washington weighed its military options.

"Intensive diplomatic contacts are taking place with the United Nations and I believe the solution to the crisis is political," Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf said.

Sahhaf, in an interview with Qatar's satellite TV station Al Jazeera, said Iraq was in "continuous consultation with France, Russia and China" as well as other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

Baghdad wants "a political solution on a sound basis which would lead to a lifting of the embargo," he said.

If diplomacy fails, however, Iraq "does not fear a military strike," he said, warning that U.S.-led military action would "provoke a violent upheaval in the entire region and lead not to a settlement but a deterioration."

Sahhaf said the diplomatic efforts underway were focused on "implementing U.N. resolutions according to their legal interpretation and not by adding extra conditions."

Iraq is also in contact with U.N. chief Kofi Annan "to fill the holes" in Security Council resolution 1205 which calls on Baghdad to restore its cooperation with U.N. arms inspection

tors, he said.

He was referring to the omission of any reference to paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which calls for a lifting of the oil embargo on Iraq once it has been declared free of weapons of mass destruction.

Washington rejected French and Chinese proposals to include a reference to paragraph 22 in the Security Council's condemnation of Iraq's break with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of its disarmament.

The United States and Britain have threatened to punish Iraq with military action unless it rolls back the Oct. 31 decision to halt all cooperation with UN SCOM.

According to diplomats, Baghdad triggered the latest crisis in part to seek assurances that a lifting of sanctions depended solely on its disarmament and not on Iraq's President Saddam Hussein's overthrow.

In Washington, President Bill Clinton met with senior Pentagon officials Tuesday to explore options for a possible military attack on Iraq as Defence Secretary William Cohen stepped up the movement of U.S. ships into the region.

"The military option is still on the table," Cohen said.

The United States will consider "a significant degradation" of Iraq's "warning capacity," he added.

Clinton and his advisers also were discussing diplomatic options, a senior administration

official said. Participants included Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other top military and civilian officials.

"This cannot go on indefinitely," State Department spokesman James P. Rubin said. "Saddam Hussein is not an abstract threat." With inspections suspended, Rubin said, "he will be able to reconstitute his weapons in a matter of months, not years."

Cohen, speaking at a Pentagon photo session with Singapore's defence minister, Tony Tan, said he has decided to hasten the movement of the USS Enterprise aircraft carrier and a group of Marine warships into the region in case the United States chooses the military option.

Asked what airstrikes against Iraq might achieve, Cohen said the goal would be to make sure Saddam, in the absence of U.N. inspections, is not reconstituting his weapons of mass destruction.

"We'd consider the possibility of degrading his capability of manufacturing the weapons of mass destruction, or the means of delivering them, of posing a threat to the region... It would be a significant degradation of his capacity," Cohen said, adding that he hoped it would not be necessary to take such steps.

David Leavy, spokesman for the National Security Council, said, "There are a number of public and private contacts with Iraq. We feel he knows what he needs to do."

Arab League urges Turkey to pull out from Iraq

Agence France Presse

THE ARAB LEAGUE on Tuesday called for an immediate end to a Turkish military incursion into northern Iraq, saying such practices harmed relations between Ankara and Arab countries.

"Turkey must withdraw its troops immediately from northern Iraq and cease these practices which have negative repercussions on the historic relations between Turkey and the Arab World," league assistant secretary general for Arab affairs, Ahmad Ben Helli, told reporters.

He expressed the League's "indignation and concern" over the military incursion into northern Iraq and said Turkish justifications were rejected.

"This is a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of an Arab League member state [Iraq] and of international law," Ben Helli said.

Iraq called for the United Nations to intervene and halt Turkey's incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan, warning that Baghdad had the right to retaliate.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf sent a message to U.N. chief Kofi Annan urging the world body "to take the necessary measures to condemn the Turkish invasion... and call for Turkey to withdraw its troops immediately."

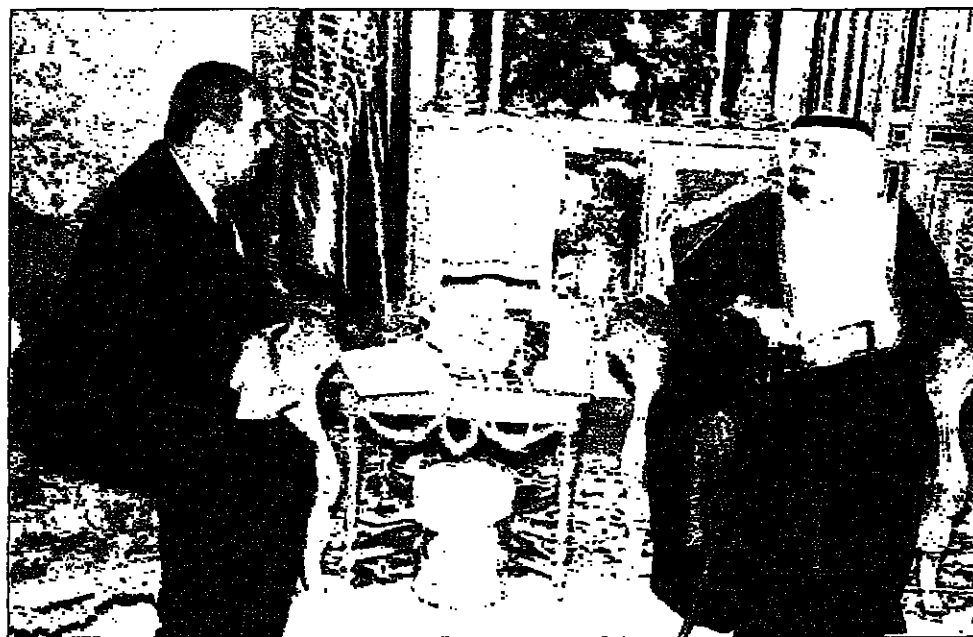
"In keeping with international law, Iraq reserves the right to retaliate against this cowardly military aggression and claim damages," Sahhaf said, quoted by the official news agency INA.

Turkish troops, backed by fighter planes and combat helicopters, crossed into Kurdish-held northern Iraq on Sunday in pursuit of Turkish Kurdish rebels, triggering condemnation from Baghdad.

The president, at a weekend meeting, had asked for more diplomatic and military options. White House press secretary Joe Lockhart said Tuesday's meeting was "part of the military options process."

Lockhart said the meeting should send Saddam the message that "the world community is determined that he reverse course and allow full cooperation with (U.N.) inspectors. And that all options remain on the table should he decide on his current course."

Clinton's spokesman said no decisions were expected from the meeting.



Saudi Arabia's King Fahd on Tuesday receives Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh who conveyed to him a message from His Majesty King Hussein

Tarawneh delivers message from King Hussein to Saudi monarch

RIYADH (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh yesterday delivered a message of appreciation and good wishes from His Majesty King Hussein to King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. King Hussein expressed in his letter his appreciation and gratitude to the Saudi monarch for his good wishes.

The message also dealt with topics of bilateral ties between the two countries.

Tarawneh, accompanied by Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, Interior Minister Nayef Qadi and Jordan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Hani Khalifeh conveyed to King Fahd greetings from His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

For his part, the Saudi monarch inquired about King Hussein's health and

asked Tarawneh to convey his greetings to King Hussein and the Regent.

Tarawneh also delivered a message to Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz from King Hussein, expressing his appreciation of the Saudi crown prince's visit to him in Washington.

At the meeting with Crown Prince Abdullah, the two sides reviewed developments in the Middle East, particularly the status of the peace process in the wake of the conclusion of an agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis at the White House.

The two sides described the agreement as an important step forward, calling for its implementation and for continued efforts towards a comprehensive settlement.

The two sides also discussed the current crisis between Iraq and the U.N., stressing the need for Iraq and the U.N. to resume cooperation.

The two sides emphasised the need for stronger relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia in the economic, political and security fields.

They also agreed on arranging a meeting by the Jordanian-Saudi joint committee to be held soon.

The prime minister met with Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz, the Saudi minister of interior, and reviewed with him bilateral relations and cooperation in security matters, especially combating smuggling operations across the two countries' common borders.

Israel cabinet likely to meet today

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's cabinet will probably meet on Wednesday to vote on the new interim peace accord with the Palestinians, a senior Israeli official said on Tuesday.

Israel halted discussion of the land-for-security deal last Friday after a bomb attack in Jerusalem and said ministers would not reconvene until they were satisfied that the Palestinians would wage "all-out war" on anti-Israel militants.

"We are expecting certain things from the Palestinians in relation to the war against terrorism and we hope to get these by the end of the day," the official told Reuters.

"If we do, then the chances are good that we'll convene tomorrow," the official said.

He added that the cabinet would probably vote on the deal on Wednesday, allowing parliament to start its endorsement debate on Thursday.

The accord provides for the phased handover by Israel of 13 per cent more of the West Bank to Palestinian self-rule over 12 weeks matched by specific Palestinian steps against violence.

The Israeli official would not specify what information Israel awaited from the Palestinians, calling it "sensitive."

A senior Palestinian security official, Rashid Abu Shabab, said Israel had not made any precise demands and alleged Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was "playing games."

PNA resumes dialogue with Islamists

GAZA CITY (AP) — Despite its crackdown on Islamists, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has renewed a high-level dialogue with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, apparently in an attempt to prevent a violent backlash, participants said Tuesday.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad representatives met separately Monday with Tayeb Abdul Rahim, the secretary general of the PNA and one of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's closest advisers. Abdul Rahim would not comment on the meetings Tuesday.

However, Imad Falouji, a former Hamas activist and member of Arafat's cabinet, suggested the aim was to work out a relationship in which Hamas and Islamic Jihad would be recognised as legitimate opposition groups. In exchange, the two groups would stop trying to sabotage the

Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

"We are not against the opposition, but they should respect Palestinian law and respect the commitments of the Palestinian Authority," Falouji said in an apparent reference to the peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

It was not clear whether Hamas and Islamic Jihad would agree to such a trade which would require calling a halt to attacks on Israelis. Such violence is a key element of the ideology of both groups.

The latest crackdown began Oct. 29, in response to a suicide attack by Hamas on an Israeli convoy in the Gaza Strip. In a second bombing, two Islamic Jihad activists blew themselves up in Jerusalem's outdoor market last Friday.

The violence prompted Israel to suspend ratifica-

tion of the Oct. 23 land-for-security agreement under which Israel was to withdraw from 13 per cent of the West Bank, in exchange for tougher Palestinian measures against Islamists.

In response to the bombings, Arafat's security forces detained hundreds of suspected Hamas and Islamic Jihad followers and placed the spiritual leader of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, under house arrest.

Mahmoud Zahar, a Hamas leader, said that in his meeting with Abdul Rahim on Monday, he demanded the release of all detainees against whom there was no evidence of involvement in attacks.

Zahar said the PNA must also release Yassin. "Our demands were clear that no one should be arrested just for belonging to Hamas," Zahar told Associated

Press Television News.

Zahar said the group wanted to continue the contacts. "We are talking about a dialogue in which each side's needs can be addressed in order to reach common ground," he said.

Nafez Azzam, an Islamic Jihad leader, refused to discuss the meetings.

The renewed talks were likely to anger the Israeli government which has made an uncompromising campaign against the activists a key condition for implementing the peace accord.

However, Arafat is faced with a possible violent backlash if he takes the crackdown too far. Hamas, especially, is strongly rooted in Palestinian society, providing badly needed social services with a network of clinics, schools and kindergartens.

Outcome of Lower House speakership race uneasy to predict

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh

AMMAN — As the 13th Parliament's second ordinary session nears, the race for the influential Lower House speakership is heating up.

So far, seven deputies have announced their candidacies. While the line-up is still not set in stone, it pits older generation, mainstream, Islamist and new-breed lawmakers in a contest for a high profile and coveted position.

The contestants are: current incumbent Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour, Ali Abul Ragheb, Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh, Abdul Hadi Majali, Abdullah Akaleh, Mohammad Oran and Ahmad Innab.

The one-year post does not only entail much travelling, meeting with high-level delegations and ceremonial duties such as inaugurating events, but also involves steering discussions in the plenary and deciding which deputies will be heard during sessions.

According to deputies and informed

sources, the contestants who stand the best chances are Srour, Abul Ragheb and Rawabdeh — if the three remain in the running.

Although regarded by many as the House "clean," long-time deputy Rawabdeh, who has held several ministerial posts since 1976, could face a tough challenge.

No one denies Rawabdeh's expertise in the legal workings of Parliament; he was, after all, the one to draft the present internal regulations of the Lower House.

But as one source said, "deputies would rather have his shrewdness and intelligence on their side during discussions rather than have him as a dominant speaker."

As for former industry and trade minister Abul Ragheb, his progressive leaning and diplomatic style have helped him maintain good relations with most members of Parliament, thus affording him solid points in the contest.

In September, Abul Ragheb led an initiative by assembling a group of 33 deputies that helped the government of Prime Minister

Fayez Tarawneh obtain an overwhelming vote of confidence. Abul Ragheb, head of the House powerful Finance and Economic Committee, belongs to a new generation

NEWS ANALYSIS

of deputies and could very likely be the "new face" that many are calling for in the House.

As the incumbent, Srour has come to be generally accepted in Parliament, but some of his colleagues have said they find his way of doing business inappropriate. For example, among his critics are deputies who have charged that the manner in which House delegations are selected has been inequitable. Others have criticised the way he grants lawmakers the floor, saying that he often denies some deputies a turn to speak during discussions.

But as one analyst put it, Srour, with his experience, has managed to see the House through difficult times — an achievement

worth valuable points. Also in his favour is that lawmakers are familiar with Srour, a former minister of public works. Some deputies, including opponents who might later abandon the leadership battle, would prefer to lobby for "the familiar face rather than try a new one."

Srour, who secured his fourth term last year as speaker, is the longest serving House speaker. His predecessor, Islamist deputy Abdul Latif Arabiyat, served for three consecutive terms in the 11th Parliament.

Initial reports indicate that Srour is backed by his 18-member Democratic Solidarity Bloc and the 10-member National Bloc. The 13-member Parliamentary Alliance Bloc is supporting Abul Ragheb, while Rawabdeh is running independently.

Akaleh, meanwhile, enjoys little support because of the absence of any Islamist deputies from the Muslim Brotherhood that last year boycotted the elections.

In addition, the Islamist deputy recently left the Islamic Action Front and the Muslim Brotherhood. The decision is likely to

hurt him politically.

The remaining three candidates, if they stay the course, have very little — if any — chance of securing the post, according to deputies. They are Majali, a former ambassador to the U.S. and National Constitutional Party leader; Oran, a physician and former director of Malhas Hospital; and Innab, also a physician.

The Royal Court has confirmed that "it will have nothing to do with the upcoming race."

Royal Court Chief Jawad Anani recently told deputies that the Court does not favour one contestant over the other and that there will be no official intervention in the process.

Deputies say that in previous years, it was "common knowledge" that official pressure figured heavily in the election of the speaker.

Judging from the constantly changing stands of deputies, predictions of the outcome of the race, conducted by secret ballot, would be premature.

(Continued on page 2)

Taleban say Ben Laden indictment could put American citizens at risk

KABUL (AFP) — The United States risks endangering the lives of its citizens abroad if Washington persists with its bid to prosecute alleged terrorist Osama Ben Laden, Afghanistan's Taliban authorities warned Tuesday.

In an unprecedented official statement, the militia accused Washington of double standards, saying the U.S. indictment against the Afghanistan-based Saudi dissident could whip-up a costly regional response.

"What the Americans will gain is a storm of hatred against them in the region, and in the Muslim World, which will cost them hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of years to find any friends here," said the statement, read over official Radio Shariat.

The U.S. has indicted Ben Laden for the bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa on Aug. 7, which killed 224 people, and announced a \$5 million reward for his capture and arrest.

"This is not only a violation of national sovereignty and

independence of Afghanistan but also it cannot guarantee the safety for U.S. citizens anywhere," the statement added.

Legal moves were instigated after the U.S. staged cruise missile attacks on alleged Ben Laden terrorist camps in Afghanistan and a chemical plant in Sudan, which led to widespread condemnation of Washington's actions.

Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar has resisted requests to hand over the Saudi dissident.

On Monday, the Taliban supreme court fixed a Nov. 20 deadline to receive evidence over Ben Laden's alleged involvement in terrorism, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

A court statement, quoted by the AIP, said it had so far received no proof to support the allegations against Ben Laden.

The supreme court would initiate legal proceedings if any evidence is furnished by the deadline, otherwise Ben Laden would be declared innocent and the issue closed, it said.

The Taliban statement Tues-

day said Ben Laden, "who has lived in our country as a respected guest," will enjoy hero status because of his military efforts in the 1980s against occupation by the former Soviet Union.

It said Washington had once afforded Ben Laden similar status but had now decided "to upset the Afghan people with its enmity."

"This is the big mistake of America. It turns friends into enemies. The Afghan people were grateful for U.S. assistance during the Soviet invasion," the broadcast added.

"But regrettably, following the Soviet defeat, the Afghan policy of the U.S. changed."

Ensuing policies were supposed to "open a new chapter of good ties so that tension is eased in the region and American interests are guaranteed and American enemies are not increased in the region."

However, according to Radio Shariat this stance had changed with the killing of innocent civilians in the cruise missile attacks and a shift in U.S. foreign policy.

Cyprus warns Israel 'spies' threaten ties

NICOSIA (AFP) — Cyprus Defence Minister Yiannakis Omirou warned Monday that the case of two Israelis detained on suspicion of spying could have a serious impact on relations as officials ruled out any possibility of a negotiated release.

"If they are proven to be agents of [Israel's foreign intelligence service] the Mossad, then there is a certainty that there will be consequences for relations between the two countries," Omirou said in an interview with Cyprus public radio from Athens.

"Certainly this is something which worries us especially in the context of the Israeli-Turkish military alliance which provides for the exchange of intelligence between the general staffs of the two countries," he said.

Greek-Cypriot politicians have expressed great concern about military cooperation agreements Israel has signed since February 1996 with Turkey, which controls the north of the divided east Mediterranean island.

The leader of Omirou's EDEK socialist party, Vassos Lysandris, a prominent hawk, was more direct in his accusations against the Jewish state.

"I believe this is a spying case — what else could it be for heaven's sake — and that those for whom the Israeli

agents were working was certainly Israel and as a consequence Turkey," he told reporters.

Udi Argov, 37, and Igal Damari, 49, were arrested after a midnight raid Friday on a flat in Zygi village on Cyprus' south coast. They were detained on suspicion of spying against the country's National Guard.

Public radio cited police sources Monday as saying the pair were in the same area at about this time last year, allegedly monitoring National Guard movements.

The sources also said that the two men denied that a laptop computer, portable phone and two scanners in the flat belonged to them.

Cypriot officials ruled out the possibility of a negotiated release for them as promised by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the weekend.

"The position is that the file must be completed and I don't think that the police have the possibility in this case of releasing anybody... without instructions from the proper authorities that is [myself]," said Attorney General Alecos Markides.

Justice Minister Nicos Koshis denied that Israel had made representations for the men's release.

"No one has said they should be released, and no one has come to the ministry to intervene on their behalf because there is justice in Cyprus and there is an investigation," he said.

Netanyahu had promised to secure the men's release, and the Hebrew press reported that Israeli Attorney General Eliyahu Rubinstein was personally directing diplomatic efforts.

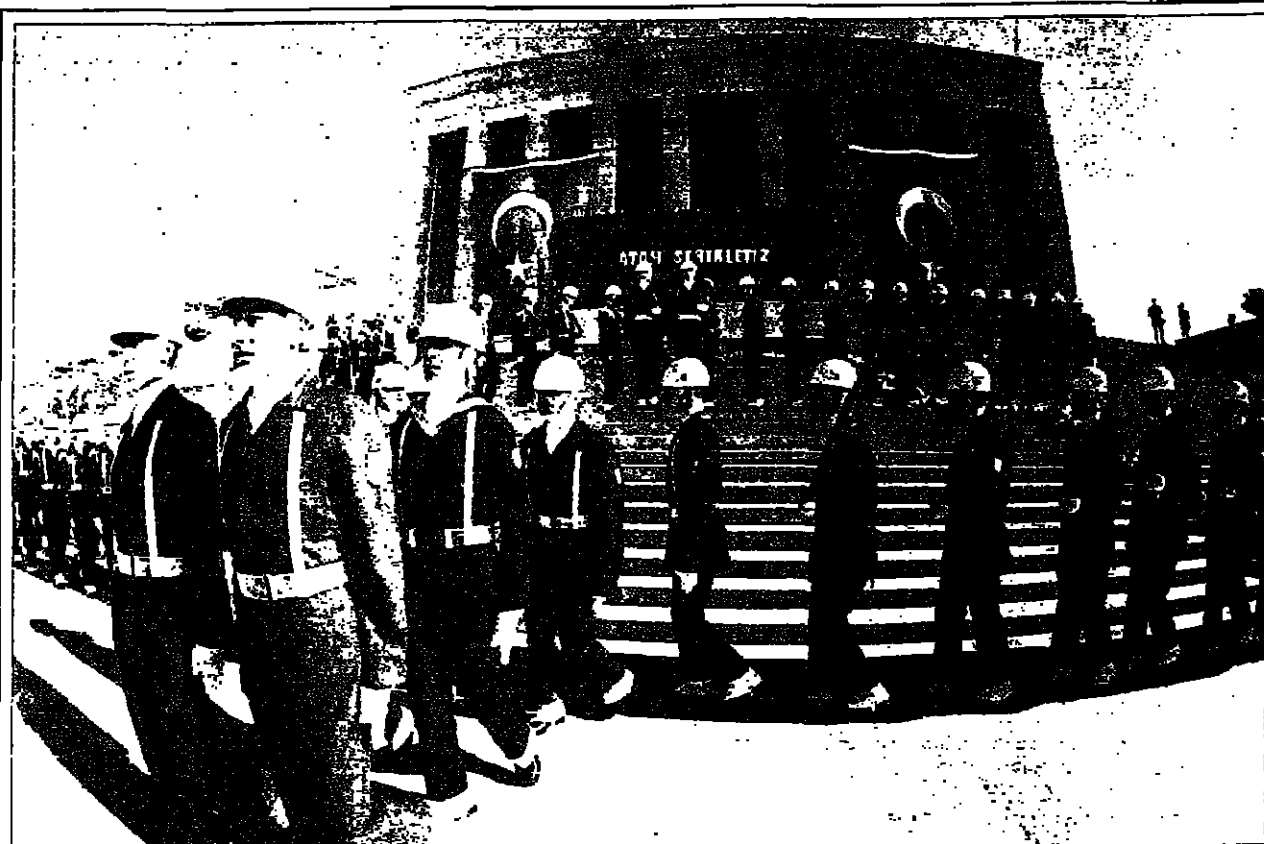
"Every Israeli citizen is important to us. We will look into this and will certainly bring them home," Netanyahu had said.

The comments sparked anger in Cyprus. "The least we expect from third parties is to respect the international law as we do," Omirou told reporters on his return to the island from Athens.

The island's second largest party described Netanyahu's comments as "provocative and unacceptable."

"They are an indication of the mentality which characterises the Israeli government," said the communist party AKEL.

The Cyprus foreign ministry was more diplomatic. "Every country shows interest when one of its own is arrested and they have a right to request information about the issue," Permanent Secretary Alecos Shambos said.



TURKEY MARKS ATATURK'S DEATH: Turkish honour guards Tuesday march past the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, founder of the Turkish republic, in Ankara. Ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of Ataturk's death were held on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Israeli general stirs uproar with bid to censor peace songs

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A senior Israeli general sparked an uproar Tuesday after he assailed an army choir for singing two well-known peace songs dating from the 1973 war.

Major General Yaacov Amidror, commander of the army's colleges, complained angrily after the choir sang the songs during a closed-door seminar last month marking the 25th anniversary of the war.

The songs, "The Children of the Winter of '73" and "I Give You a Promise," are often played at army functions and include lyrics in which soldiers promise their children that the 1973 conflict will be "the last war."

"The words in these songs are lies," Amidror told the seminar following the performance by the army Education Corps band and choir.

"It is a lie to promise a 'dove with an olive branch' and no one ever promised this would be the last war," he said.

The general's remarks were reported for the first time this week on Israel Radio and immediately drew calls from left members of parliament for his dismissal.

"His view is as narrow as that of an ant," charged Yossi Sarid, head of the Meretz Party, in accusing Amidror of being a myopic militarist.

It was not the first controversy surrounding Amidror, the first observant Jew named

to the general staff, since he was promoted to major general and named to head the National Defence College earlier this year.

In a newspaper interview shortly after his appointment, Amidror assailed the secular majority in Israel, saying "secular Jews are nothing but Hebrew-speaking gentiles."

The remark prompted calls from numerous politicians for Amidror's dismissal. He eventually apologised for the statement, but had already been branded a rabid religious nationalist by the political left.

An Israeli army spokesman declined to comment on the latest controversy, saying Amidror's statement about the peace songs was made in a

closed military forum and involved his personal views.

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi came to Amidror's defence, saying the remarks "should not be turned into a political argument."

"Major General Amidror is free to express his opinion, that is why he was promoted," he told reporters.

Some senior army and reserve officers were highly critical of the general however.

"This is just one man's extremism," said Nehemia Dagan, a former chief army education officer. "This comes from a militant political view and I'm sure the rest of the army does not think this way," he told Israel Radio.

Violence mars elections in Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — A rash of violent incidents marred Israeli municipal elections Tuesday as a host of independents and small parties vied with major political groups for posts often seen as stepping stones to national political prominence.

Israel Radio reported more than 300 incidents of physical assault or property destruction linked to the elections, being held in 161 towns and cities across the country.

Police said they had intervened more than 180 times, with 84 of the incidents occurring in Tel Aviv, where seven candidates were running for mayor and scores for positions on the municipal council.

In Lod, near Tel Aviv, shots were fired at a car bearing posters for one candidate, slightly wounding one man, while in southern Israel, a campaigner was run over and injured by a car from a rival camp, police said.

National police chief Yehuda Wilk said the election was "the most violent in Israel's history." Analysts attributed the high number of incidents both to a general increase in social violence in Israel in recent years and to the large number of candidates and rival parties contesting the polls.

A rash of arrests also marred voting in east Jerusalem, where Palestinian leaders had called for a boycott of the election,

seen as legitimising Israel's annexation of the Arab sector of the city.

Police arrested eight Palestinians, two of them allegedly working for the Palestinian National Authority, for trying to prevent Palestinian residents from voting, police said.

Most Palestinian shops and schools remained closed for the day in protest at the election, which has been boycotted by most Palestinians since Israel occupied east Jerusalem along with the rest of the West Bank in 1967.

Opinion polls indicated that Labour-backed candidates would take over at least 10 towns from Likud.

World Bank to grant Kingdom \$265m loan

(Continued from page 1)

News reports have quoted sources offering estimates ranging from \$450 million to \$1 billion for a new IMF extended fund facility that could be offered to Jordan over the next three years.

Economists estimate that economic growth for 1998 could be as low as one per cent with the budget deficit expected to top seven per cent, well above the 3.2 per cent anticipated at the beginning of the year.

Officials and economists blame Jordan's economic downturn on an unstable

regional environment, a faltering Middle East peace process and continuing United Nations sanctions on Iraq, once Jordan's biggest trading partner.

Kamal Darwish, executive director of the World Bank's Near East and North Africa Department, discussed with Jordanian officials the country's economic performance, privatisation programme, ongoing development projects and the impact of regional developments on the economy. He also discussed the World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) programme for Jordan for the years 2000-2001 and 2002.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 "The Adventures of Teddy Ruxpin"
15:30 Children's Programme — Halfway to Cross the Galaxy and Turn Left
16:00 "French Documentary 16:30 ...Masters of the Maze 17:00 ...Doc. — Ushuaia 18:15 ...Wind at My Back 19:00 ...Le Journal 19:15 Science Magazine — E-Mé 19:30 ...News headlines 19:35 ...Comedy — Two Point 4 Children
20:00 Doc. — Envoy Special Magazine
20:30 ...Drama — NYPD Blue 21:10 ...Great Moments of Science and Technology
21:30 ...Faces and Places
22:00 ...News in English
22:30 ...Chicago Hope
22:50 Drama — The Ambassador
01:40 ...End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:36 ...Fajr
05:56 ...Sunrise/Duha
12:29 ...Dhuhr
14:58 ...Asr
16:27 ...Maghreb
18:03 ...Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sveidch. Tel. 5920740
Archdiocese of God Church Tel.
4022785
St. Joseph Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

4634590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811.
St. Alfre Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweidch Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757
The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679
The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052
The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331
The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4773261

tions will prevail with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Scattered showers are expected and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, occasional scattered showers are expected, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman11/20
Aqaba16/27
Deserts10/22
Jordan Valley15/26
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 21, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 61 per cent, Aqaba 60 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun07/13
Jerash12/21
Um Qays11/19
Madaba10/20
Petra10/22
Dead Sea16/25

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyib 4620115
Dr. Wissam Hazyia4748563
Dr. Munther Al Qadiri4779959
Dr. Batim Hanaoun5153776
AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy5537004
Rokni Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Ghazi Ta'amahe021250080
Four'ad Pharmacy021275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Saleh Saffarini091987565
Palestine Pharmacy091983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police 192.4621111.4637777
Fire Brigade4617101
Blood Bank4775121
Highway Police5343402
Traffic office4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints5605800
Price Complaints5661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 489467
Amman Municipality Complaints4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
Jordan Television4773111
Radio Jordan4774111
Water Authority5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co.4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199
The Islamic Abdil5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre5856856
Luzmila4630195
Khafid Maternity4644281/6
Aklieh Maternity4642441/2
Jabal Amnun Maternity4642362
Malhas, J. Amman4636140
Palestine Shmeisani5607071
Shmeisani Hospital5607431
Jordan Hospital5607550
University Hospital5353444
Al-Muassir Hospital 5667227/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6
Italian Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3
Al-Bashir4775111/26
Army, Marka4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital5157100
Amal Hospital5607155
Al Amal Cancer Centre5353000

ZARQA:
Govt. Hospital091983323
Zarqa National Hospital09190560
Jbn Sino Hospital091986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital091990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital021275555
Roman Catholic Hospital021272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital0217101372, 0217103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital0217102831, 0217102011
Specialty Hospital0217103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:30Damascus (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55Larnaca (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25London (RJ)
16:50Istanbul (RJ)
17:05Paris (RJ)
17:30Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:55 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

18:10Rome (RJ)
18:20Brussels, Berlin (RJ)
23:10Paris (RJ)
23:59Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

09:30Cairo (MS)
10:30Jeddah (SV)
12:20Kuwait (KU)
13:10Tunis (TU)
13:20Bahrain (GF)
14:05Rome (AZ)
15:05Vienna (OS)
15:30Algiers (AH)
18:05 Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
18:40Beirut (ME)
19:15Frankfurt (LH)
00:55 London, Damascus (BA)
01:25Athens (OA)
02:00Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
10:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:30 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
22:50 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

06:50Larnaca (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

09:45Rome (RJ)
11:00Istanbul (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
19:30Colombo (RJ)
19:35Beirut (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh, Dhanran (RJ)
20:15Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
20:15Bomabay (RJ)
20:25Cairo (RJ)
20:35New Delhi (RJ)
21:00Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
22:45Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights

06:30Larnaca (CY)
07:25 Damascus, London (BA)
07:25Paris (AF)
10:30Cairo (MS)
12:00Medina, Jeddah (SV)
13:20Kuwait (GF)
14:10Bahrain (KU)
14:10Tunis (TU)
15:30Vienna (OS)
15:30Rome (AZ)
16:20Sharigah (AH)
19:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
02:45Athens (OA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Haifa (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)



DIALOGUE MEETING OPENS: Deputising for His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, the president of the Royal Academy for Islamic Civilisation Research (Al al Bayt), Nassereddin Assad, opens a meeting to promote Islamic-Christian dialogue. The meeting will end on Thursday (Petra photo)

Officials implicated in summer water crisis plead not guilty

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Nine government officials standing trial in connection with the water contamination crisis that hit the western areas of Amman last summer Tuesday pleaded not guilty to all charges.

The nine defendants, including Water Authority Secretary General Munther Khleifat, face a number of charges ranging from forgery and complicity in forgery to causing the water pollution and failing to investigate the water's quality for human consumption.

Appearing before the Amman Criminal Court along with co-defendant Khleifat were technical assistant to the authority's secretary general, Samir

Hejazin, head of the authority's central laboratories, Hassan Amr, director of the Zai Water Treatment Plant, Mohammad Abu Taha, head of water treatment and operations at the plant, Riyad Muh-sen, the plant's maintenance department director, Muntaser Hikmat, head of the authority's quality control department, Ahmad Oleimat, the director of plant shifts, Fateh Radwan, and Salt lab health expert Mohammad Ghanaeim.

Residents of western Amman began complaining of foul-smelling and discoloured water, mostly supplied by the Zai plant, in July.

The crisis led to the resignation of Water Minister Munther Haddadin.

The court, presided over by judges Nayef Khreisat and Abdul Majid Amre, adjourned the session until Nov. 24 to start hearing the prosecution's witnesses.

Attempted murder trial postponed

Meanwhile, the Criminal Court postponed the case of four Iraqi nationals accused of the attempted murder in January of the Iraqi chargé d'affaires in Amman until Nov. 22 because two of the four defendants, who were released on bail, failed to appear in court.

The Criminal Court said it would direct the Public Security Department to assign officers to escort Ahmad Tae'i, 29, and

Ahmad Muhasein, 23, to court on the new court date. Both suspects, each of whom had been released earlier from detention on JD1,000 bail, failed to appear Tuesday.

The two defendants who appeared in court yesterday were Qasim Mohammad, 24, and Jafar Niman, 28. All four are charged with attempted murder, possession of an unlicensed gun, forgery of passports and obstructing justice.

Seven other suspects are being tried in absentia on the same charges.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the suspects attempted to assassinate Rahim Tahir, 45, on Jan. 3 near his residence in the Um Utheinah neighbourhood.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kanaan named acting PM

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal Decree was issued Tuesday appointing Minister of State for Development Affairs Taher Kanaan as acting prime minister during Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh's absence. Tarawneh left Jordan yesterday for an official visit to Saudi Arabia.

Officers visit water ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation of officers from the Armed Forces Tuesday visited the Ministry of Water. The delegation was briefed on the ministry's duties and activities.

Labour minister to attend ILO meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Labour Mohammad Mahdi Farhan on Tuesday left for Geneva, where he will attend a meeting of the International Labour Organisation. Farhan said the meeting, which will last until Nov. 20, will focus on technical issues and combating poverty.

Women's union opens factory

AMMAN (Petra) — As part of celebrations marking His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday, the Jordan Women's Union Tuesday opened a clothing factory. The factory, which was established with the help of the British embassy in Amman, will employ 10 women.

Agreements on environmental studies

AMMAN (Petra) — The University of Jordan yesterday signed two agreements worth JD40,000 with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment to conduct several water and ecological studies on the Tafleh Water Treatment Plant. Under the agreements, the university's Water and Ecological Studies Centre will conduct a 14-month study to examine the plant's effect on water resources in the Feifa basin. The study will also analyse the basin's 18 wells as well as other six wells in different sites in the area. Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Tawfiq Kreishan and University of Jordan President Walid Maani signed the agreements.

UNESCO officials visit NHF

AMMAN (J.T.) — Two United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation officials Tuesday visited the Nour Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), where they were briefed on the foundation's activities in development fields, an NHF statement said. Martin Hadlow, UNESCO regional communication advisor for Arab states and representative for Iraq and Jordan, and Giovanni Vaccardi, UNESCO programme specialist, were briefed by NHF Executive Director Sima Bahous and senior staff on the foundation's programmes in the areas of community development, women's enterprise, gender, child and family health, and culture and education. The UNESCO officials discussed means of further strengthening cooperation between the NHF and UNESCO.



House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour meets with Kamel Darwish, director of the World Bank's Middle East and North Africa Department, on Tuesday (Petra photo)

Humanitarian issues should factor into reform programme — Srour

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's economic reform programme should be implemented in a manner that would minimise negative effects on society's underprivileged sectors while at the same time maintaining cooperation between the Kingdom and international financial bodies, House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour said Tuesday.

In a meeting with the director of the World Bank's Near East and North Africa Department, Kamel Darwish, Srour said the two sides are responsible for working together to achieve the best results to help support the national economy.

During his talks with Srour, Darwish said he was aware of the challenges which have faced the Kingdom, especially over the past eight years. He stressed that Jordan should have the support of all concerned parties to overcome such obstacles and achieve greater development and social growth.

Darwish also met with the head of the House's Economic and Financial Committee, Ali Abul Ragheb, who gave a briefing on the programme's positive and negative effects on Jordan since its introduction.

Since the IMF-directed reform programme was implemented in 1989, real wages are estimated to have fallen by around 20 per cent.

During the meeting, Abul Ragheb and other deputies said Lloyds Company, which monitors shipping activities at the port of Aqaba, is "harming Jordan's economy and costing it more than the country can afford." They stressed the importance of ending the company's activities in Jordan.

Meanwhile, the head of the Upper House's Economic and Financial Committee, Kamel Shaer, said a "reasonable" economic growth rate estimated at five per cent per year had been achieved by the programme from 1989 to 1995.

In a memorandum sent to Darwish, Shaer said that some particular economic reforms were "too slow" and that the deadlocked peace treaty has led to a slow down in the national economy.

Darwish met also with Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai and discussed bilateral issues.

On Monday, Darwish met with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who said the government is seeking to attain higher economic growth rates to create more opportunities for Jordanian job seekers.

UNRWA chief agrees to early retirement for agency workers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The commissioner general of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), Peter Hansen, Tuesday announced that the agency will meet a demand by employees that they be entitled to retire after 25 instead of 30 years of service.

The decision becomes effective as of January 1, 1999, according to an UNRWA statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The statement said Hansen also approved an amendment to the allowance paid to UNRWA school principals, which will now be calculated at 10 per cent of the overall salary rather than paid in a lump sum of JD17 a month.

Hansen's decision was a partial response to employees' demands raised during his visit to Jordan in September to discuss the grievances of the agency's staff with representatives of several committees.

The employees also asked for higher salaries, hospitalisation benefits and improved working conditions, among other services, during talks with Hansen, who held a meeting with the agency's donor nations during his six-day stay in Amman.

UNRWA employees held a one-day strike on Sept. 15 to press for their demands, halting down social, educational and health services to tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

The strike was part of a wider protest by the agency's workers in its other fields of operations, which also include Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

UNRWA currently faces a \$65 million deficit in its \$314 million budget for 1998, a situation which has forced it to adopt cost reduction measures including suspending recruitment of teachers, cancelling hospitalisation programmes and reducing internal staff by 15 per cent.

According to the statement, Hansen will visit Amman on Dec. 2-3 to discuss outstanding issues such as proposed amendments to the wages policy and opening the door for health insurance services.

Cement company has no plans for lay-offs, manager says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Cement Factories Company does not plan to lay off or fire workers at its plants in Fuheis or Rashadieh but rather will offer them better and more benefits, the company's general manager, Taleb Rifai, said Tuesday.

At a meeting with the president of the Jordan Labour Federation, Mazen Ma'aitah, Rifai said the company plans to increase production and will safeguard workers' rights and protect their interests.

Last month, the government announced that it would allocate some of its shares in the company to its employees at a discount and sell other shares to the public.

The government said that it was selling the workers 1.2 million shares of its equity in the company at the rate of JD1.5 per share and that it would arrange for the workers to pay for their shares in instalments over 12 months.

It also said the French Lafarge company agreed to buy 33 per cent of the government's shares in the cement company in a deal worth JD72 million.

According to Rifai, the deal with the French company will secure modern technology and marketing skills as well as bring in desperately needed foreign investment.

Rifai said that the company will pursue a dialogue with its employees over any questions or problems they may have and will respect labour laws and regulations.

The company is in the process of conducting a detailed study of workers' demands in order to implement them as soon as possible, Rifai added.

At the meeting, the two sides agreed on forming two committees to represent the company's management and the workers. One of the two committees will examine means of selling the workers' shares in the company while the other will try to solve workers' demands.

Acting prime minister meets with World Food Programme director

AMMAN (Petra) — Acting Prime Minister Taher Kanaan on Tuesday held talks with Catherine Pertini, executive director of the World Food Programme, and her accompanying delegation on aspects of cooperation in food and agricultural fields.

At the meeting, which was attended by Agriculture

Minister Mijhem Khreisha and Planning Minister Nabil Ammari, the two sides discussed WFP projects in Jordan over the past 30 years, during which the programme had financed numerous agricultural projects.

Pertini said the food aid provided to Third World countries has been successful

in preventing poverty among many rural communities and assisting residents in carrying out income-generating projects.

Khreisha outlined the WFP's activities and programmes in Jordan and its assistance to national development projects.

He said the Ministry of Agriculture will give the

WFP a draft plan requesting assistance for future projects which will focus mainly on developing pasture lands.

The WFP provides food aid to farmers in rural areas to help them develop and utilise their farmlands through projects carried out in conjunction with the programme.

Drug policy seeks to upgrade use, distribution policies

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN — The misuse and abuse of drugs and vaccines costs Jordan an estimated JD120 million annually, a situation that has led members of public and private health services to join forces to draw up guidelines regulating drugs in the country.

As part of these efforts, the National Drug Policy of Jordan (NDP), an integral part of the National Health Policy, was officially launched last week.

"This policy contains strategies for the purchase, manufacture, distribution and use of drugs [in Jordan]," said Maisaa Saket, director of the Drug Directorate at the Ministry of Health. Maisaa told the Jordan Times that this policy will ensure an effective system responsible for drug registration, inspection and quality control.

The current public drug supply system is fragmented and lacks an adequate financing system. "We have insufficient health information, and there is an irrational use of drugs in the public and private health care sector," Saket said.

Jordanian drug manufacturers are pleased with the development of a national policy.

"The policy supports the national pharmaceutical industry and encourages it to develop activities in line with the essential drugs concept and also in

the research of related activities," said Maher Matalaka, secretary general of the Association of Manufacturers of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Appliances.

Drug legislation, a component of the policy, covers pricing, conducting clinical trials and the safe disposal of expired and waste pharmaceuticals.

"The National Drug Policy will guarantee the availability of safe and effective drugs which meet approved standards at the lowest possible prices for the public," said Matalaka. He added that this policy integrates a Jordan Essential Drugs List, which indicates the level of use of each drug.

This framework ensures that infant formulas, vaccines and drugs are made available to the public in a safe and cost-effective manner through public, private and non-governmental organisations.

The policy's guidelines on local drug production specify the promotion of the domestic industry's technical, productive and marketing capacities, thus lending it a competitive edge for local and export markets.

According to Matalaka, this will "ensure that the government safeguards the interest of the domestic drug industry" as Jordan enters into the Euro-Jordanian Association Agreement and continues the accession process into the World Trade Organisation.

Ernst Lauridsen, a consultant from the World Bank who worked with the gov-

ernment on the formulation of the NDP, said mechanisms to implement the policy's action plan will be emulated from successful examples in other countries.

This, he explained, will include improving and strengthening administration and upgrading quality control laboratories with advanced equipment and personnel training.

Lauridsen told the Jordan Times that emphasis is currently being placed on the training of health personnel at all levels "on the more rational use of drugs."

The NDP involves a 10-year process of monitoring and periodic reviews in which drug laws and regulations will be updated.

"The NDP will take a very long time and perhaps will never be perfect. But we believe that initial results will be seen within a few years," said Lauridsen, adding that "new legislation enshrining the principles of the policy will be ready within three years."

The NDP is expected to attract foreign investment. According to officials in the pharmaceutical sector, foreign investors are concerned with the country's policy environment.

"Most investors are encouraged if they see a clear framework under which they will be working," Lauridsen said.

Experts believe that with such an environment, regional and international investors will attract.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* "The Story of Islamic Art" (with commentary in Arabic by Dr. Mazen Asfour) at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh on Thursday Nov. 12 at 5:30 p.m.
* "Sonata de Pri-mavera" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, on Thursday Nov. 12 at 5:00 p.m. (Tel. 4610858).

EXHIBITIONS

* Exhibition of Candles: Candles With Certain Properties" at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 12
* Exhibition of watercolours by Mukarram Haghon-

douqa at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 24.
* "Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920 - 2000" at the University of Jordan, Faculty of Engineering, until Nov. 20.
* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Nov. 28.
* Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boulata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfia Al Sa'di, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'id Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4643251/2).

Russia reaches tentative food aid deal with European Union

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia has reached a tentative agreement on food aid with the European Union just days after completing a similar deal with the United States, news reports said Tuesday.

Under the plan, Russia would purchase food worth 400 million European currency units (\$480 million) and receive E.U. humanitarian aid worth 10 million to 12 million euros (\$12 to \$14 million), Deputy Prime Minister Gennady Kulik said, according to Russian news agencies.

The two sides will meet shortly to finalise the deal, he said. EU officials said Monday that a deal was in the works, but have not yet announced any agreement.

The food purchased by the Russian government would be sold on the Russian domestic market with the profits spent on social programmes, Kulik said. Russia wants the humanitarian aid to be targeted primarily towards its frigid northern regions, he said.

The report comes just four days after Russia and the United States signed a

\$625 million agreement for 3.1 million tonnes of U.S. food aid, including wheat, corn, pork and beef.

Russia's economic crisis, combined with drought and falling food imports, have raised concerns about the country's food supplies heading into the winter. No serious food shortages have been reported, but the government wants to ensure that plenty is on hand.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov rounded up several of his top cabinet ministers and headed to parliament in a bid to win broad support for his economic recovery programme.

The session was closed, but was expected to revolve around an anti-crisis plan that was approved by the cabinet 10 days ago.

The major themes have been widely discussed, but the government has yet to release all the details.

Russia's economic crisis hit almost three months ago, and Primakov's government has moved slowly to put together a response.

The prime minister has sought to stabilise the shrinking economy and has

not taken any drastic steps.

Primakov still has wide respect among the various political factions, but liberal critics say he's too hesitant to pursue genuine market reforms, while Communists and other hardliners would like to see even more government control over the economy.

The International Monetary Fund and other international lenders have already expressed dissatisfaction with the plan as short on specific measures and heavy on state controls over the economy.

The group has said a solid plan and proof of its implementation are necessary for the further release of a \$22.6 billion bailout package. The loan was agreed upon last summer but frozen when the crisis hit in August.

Also, First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov urged the Duma to approve the long-stalled START II arms control treaty.

President Boris Yeltsin supports the agreement, but the Communists and other hardliners who control parliament have blocked its ratification for years.

Diana fund to help landmine victims, not clearance

LONDON (R) — The Princess Diana Memorial Fund, set up after her death in a Paris car crash, will give no money towards landmine clearance but has set aside £1 million (\$1.66 million) to help the victims of mines.

"We haven't ruled out giving money to landmine clearance in the future but on this occasion we thought the money would be used to maximum effect if aimed at the victims," a fund spokeswoman told Reuters Tuesday.

She was responding to media reports that the fund, which has collected \$85 million since Diana's death last year, has ignored landmine clearance charities in favour of organisations helping those whose lives have been shattered by mines.

The spokeswoman said Diana had always been associated with relieving individual suffering and noted that the European

Union had already earmarked about £50 million for the clearance of landmines.

An announcement on how exactly the £1 million will be handed out will be made around Christmas time, she said.

"Back in March we announced we were setting aside one million for the landmines cause. We then put together a landmine forum to discuss how best to use that money," she said.

But landmine clearance charities were less than pleased. The Mines Advisory Group (MAG) has already had to close its programme in Bosnia and its income is now lower than before Diana adopted the cause, the Evening Standard reported.

"I think it's incredible that they are calling it the Diana Memorial Fund when it does nothing to support the causes she was committed to," Lou McGrath, director

of the MAG, told the paper. Landmines, and the havoc they wreak, was a cause the princess threw herself into in her last months. Television pictures of her visiting victims around the world brought the issue firmly to international public attention.

The United Nations announced in September that the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines will go into force on March 1, 1999.

Bosnian landmine victims, who Diana visited just two weeks before her death, and U.N. officials said the convention would not have happened without her.

The memorial fund has recently run into public opposition over plans to build a lavish garden with a 100-metre high fountain in Diana's memory.

The plans have been scaled down and a decision delayed, after protests by London residents fearing an invasion of tourists.

Researchers look into brain's role in easing the pain

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The tiniest and most innocuous touch — even the cool breeze of an air-conditioned room — can cause terrible sensations to those suffering from chronic pain.

Discoveries about pain and its routes through the brain and nervous system give hope that new methods can ease the suffering, researchers at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience said Monday.

"The brain can be confused into thinking something is painful," said Lorne Mendell of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. If that can be understood, "one can try to devise therapeutic methods to basically damp down chronic pain."

Low-dose anti-depressants have been found effective among some sufferers of chronic pain syndromes. But there's also great interest in harnessing the body's natural painkillers.

The researchers agreed that dummy pills that yield relief in some patients somehow activate the body's pain-modulating systems.

"It's real. It's not imagined," said Catherine Bushnell of McGill University in Canada.

"I don't think we're ever going to find the magic bullet that works for all types of pain," said Ronald Dubner of the University of Maryland. He suggested there may be a need for medications that can work at the site of the injury and others that work on the central nervous system.

Bushnell said that once the central nervous system has been damaged by a stroke or a disease like multiple sclerosis, a person can experience ongoing pain so severe that even lightly brushing the skin causes a terrible burning sensation.

In brain imaging studies in which patients place hands in painfully hot water, she has seen a

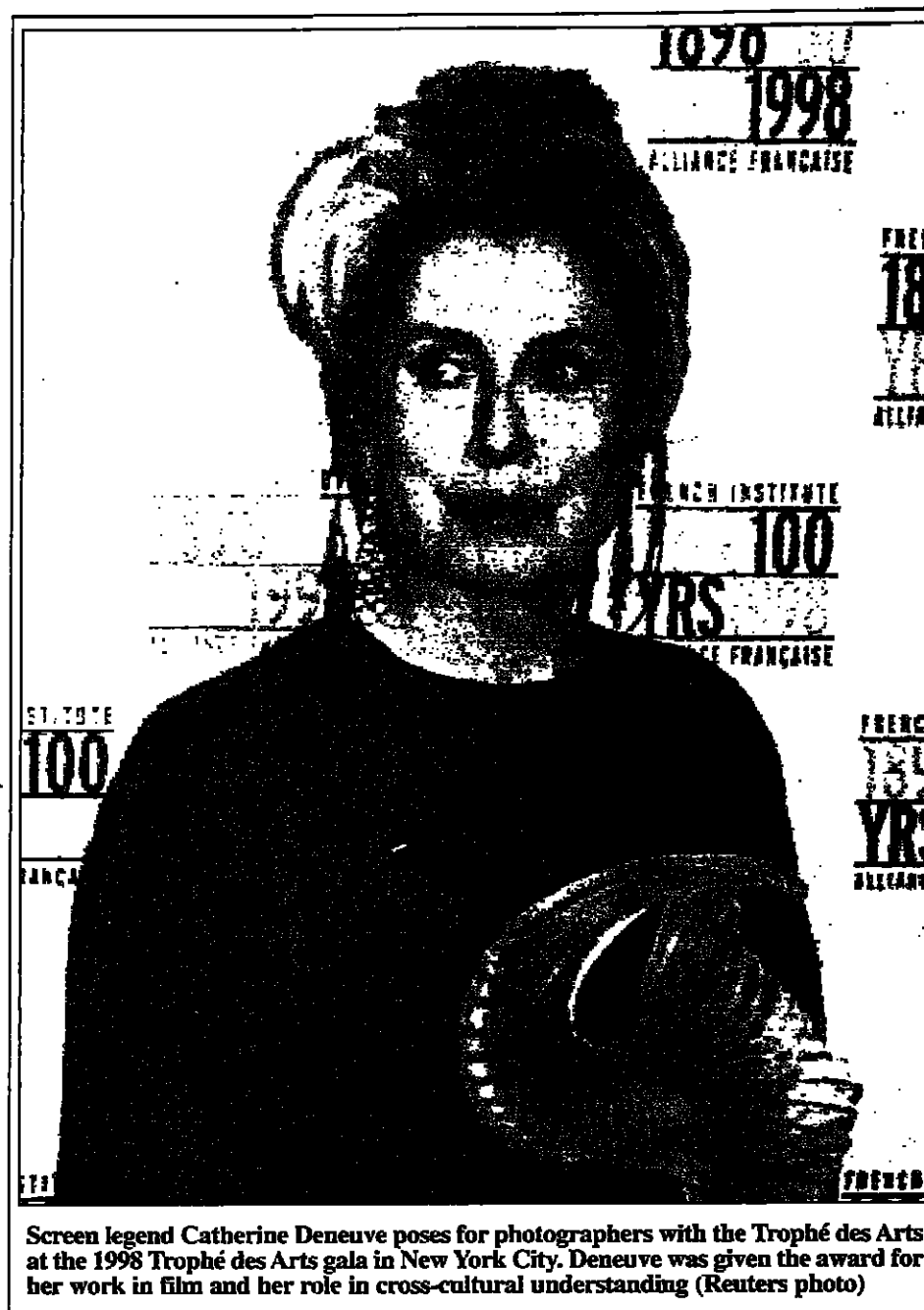
"signature" of pain in four parts of the brain's outer layer, called the cerebral cortex.

She and fellow researchers were able to increase or decrease the activity in some of those regions through hypnosis or distraction techniques, which teach the nervous system to reinterpret the sensation, she said.

Dubner is studying the brain stem and its role in controlling aspects of chronic pain. Some pain sends a barrage of impulses into the central nervous system and over time can alter the receptors on the surface of nerve cells. The receptors become sensitive to the signals and can produce exaggerated pain sensations.

"It appears that with chronic pain, weak signals from an old site of injury are sufficient to maintain this effect," he said.

Dubner and colleagues found that some areas of the brain stem dampen the pain while others increase it.



Screen legend Catherine Deneuve poses for photographers with the Trophée des Arts at the 1998 Trophée des Arts gala in New York City. Deneuve was given the award for her work in film and her role in cross-cultural understanding (Reuters photo)

Anthrax threats sent to two Catholic parishes, an anti-abortion group

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Less than two weeks after an anthrax hoax against abortion clinics in four states, letters claiming to contain the bacteria were sent to a Catholic parish here and sites in two other states.

St. Matthew Catholic School was closed Monday after someone opened an envelope with a note saying: "You have been exposed to anthrax." The Chicago office of an anti-abortion group and a Catholic church in suburban Buffalo, New York, received similar letters.

The language of the note was nearly identical to a phony anthrax threat sent 10 days before to an abortion clinic in Indianapolis and other abortion clinics in the Midwest. FBI spokesman Doug Garrison said it was possible a copycat was playing on fear from the previous incidents.

Emergency crews scrubbed down six parish office workers who may have been exposed at the school. The workers also took antibiotics as a precau-

tion because investigators did not know if the threat was genuine. In all, 481 students and teachers fled the school.

Nine people were decontaminated at Queen of Martyrs church in Cheektowaga, New York, after the parish received a similar threat.

FBI agents were investigating the third letter, which was sent to the Chicago office of the Pro-Life Action League claiming to contain anthrax, a strain of bacteria that can be used as a biological weapon.

The office was not evacuated and none of the seven people there was hospitalized, said the group's executive director, Joseph Scheidler.

The letters to Indianapolis and Chicago had Texas postmarks; the letter to the New York church was from Illinois.

Authorities did not know why anyone would target the school, which was closed Tuesday so investigators could test for possible contamination.

Anthrax spores can infect people who breathe them in. It can be treated with antibiotics, but can kill if left untreated.

"It makes you wonder about where your kids can be safe," said Tom Leonard, whose 9-year-old son is a third-grader at St. Matthew. "You would think you could count on them to be safe at school."

Principal Rita Parson said her students were not told why they were leaving the school until they arrived at nearby Cathedral High School, where their parents picked them up.

"Everyone was crying and some people were upset," said Allyson Hayes, a 12-year-old seventh grader.

Postal Inspector P.J. Farmer said authorities intend to find and prosecute those responsible for the threats.

"You don't go into the airport and say 'Bomb.' You don't go into the bank and say 'Robbery.' And you don't send people letters in the mail that say 'Anthrax,'" he said.

Not Kennedy's brain in archive photos — report

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Photographs in the U.S. National Archives of the autopsy of John F. Kennedy include pictures of a brain that sustained less damage than the assassinated president's, The Washington Post said Tuesday.

"I am 90 to 95 per cent certain that the photographs in the archives are not of President Kennedy's brain," said the chief analyst of the Assassinations Records Review Board Douglas Horne, in a report issued Monday.

"If they aren't," Horne said, "that can mean only one thing — that there has been a cover-up of the medical evidence."

According to some 400,000 pages of internal records that the five-member review board compiled until Sept. 30 and which were released by the National

Archives Monday, doctors performed two examinations of Kennedy's brain after the Nov. 22, 1963, shooting in Dallas, Texas.

In a separate staff report by the review board, the conclusion is that the physicians possibly examined two different brains — the first with little damage consistent to a shot in the front of the head, the second with massive damage to the rear.

"The second brain was consistent with a shot from behind. The first one was not," Horne said in his report.

The board also based its findings on interviews with witnesses to both autopsies.

A former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent who witnessed the first autopsy only hours after Kennedy was shot, told the panel that the brain examined then was badly damaged

with more than half its mass missing.

When shown archive photographs allegedly taken sometime after the autopsy, the witness said they did not square with what he had seen since they showed a nearly complete brain.

And a Navy photographer who took pictures at a supplementary brain examination two or three days after the assassination, said his photos not only did not resemble those at the archive, but they seemed to be on a different type of film from the one he used.

The photographer also said that some pictures he took were missing from the archive.

Jeremy Gunn, former executive director and general counsel of the review board, said he thought it "highly plausible" that there were two different brain examinations.

NEWS IN BRIEF

War crimes court seeks firm U.N. steps on Yugoslavia

THE HAGUE (R) — The international war crimes tribunal has appealed to the U.N. Security Council to take "compelling measures" to force Yugoslavia to recognise the court's jurisdiction in the region. The call follows last week's refusal by Yugoslavia to allow U.N. investigators into the troubled Serb province of Kosovo on the grounds the conflict there was an internal one. At the same time, Yugoslavia said it did not accept any investigation by the international court in Kosovo. This is the fourth time the president of the tribunal has notified this body of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's non-compliance. Tribunal President Gabrielle Kirk McDonald wrote in a letter released by the court Tuesday. Kirk McDonald said previous Security Council statements had failed to bring about the required compliance with the tribunal. "Therefore, I respectfully seek from the Security Council measures which are sufficiently compelling to bring the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the fold of law-abiding nations," she said. The tribunal, established by the Security Council in May 1993 to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, has no enforcement bodies of its own. The U.S. government has already pledged to cooperate fully with the Security Council in resolving the compliance issue. However, observers say it remains unclear how far the West is prepared to go, as strong-arm tactics could jeopardise a shaky ceasefire between Serbs and ethnic Albanian guerrillas in the province.

'Zero tolerance for racism' in U.K. military

LONDON (R) — Britain is determined to stamp out racism and sexual harassment in the armed forces, Defence Secretary George Robertson said Tuesday. "We mean what we say about a zero tolerance policy," he told a ministry-sponsored conference on boosting equal opportunities attended by General Colin Powell, former chairman of the U.S. joint chiefs of staff. "We really do want to see more women and ethnic minorities in uniform." The armed forces launched an advertising campaign in April to attract more women and members of ethnic minorities. At present women make up 6.3 per cent and ethnic minorities one per cent of all soldiers. The introduction of gender-free testing means women can now serve in units that operate directly behind the front line, such as the Royal Auxiliary Corps, though the front-line infantry and tank divisions remain out of bounds. "We want to see armed forces which truly reflect our increasingly multi-cultural society," said Robertson, who has asked Powell to advise on how to attract more blacks and Asians into the forces. He praised Powell for viewing his colour as a source of pride, strength and inspiration and echoed the general's dictum: "Others may use my race against me but I will never use it against myself."

ECOMOG steps up campaign against rebels in Sierra Leone

FREETOWN (AFP) — The west African intervention force in Sierra Leone has stepped up its offensive against rebels, killing hundreds in air raids on numerous strongholds, security sources said Tuesday. Over recent days, Alpha jets and tanks of the Nigerian-led force known as ECOMOG have attacked rebel strongholds in three eastern strongholds of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF): Pendetu, Quiva and Ngernia. One ECOMOG officer said: "We have destroyed over 500 junta rebels we bombard them non-stop. We have not yet taken Kailahun town, the rebel headquarters and the strongest rebel town in the country." Hospital sources in two towns said they were treating around 100 wounded rebels. "Rebel corpses are being buried in mass graves to prevent an outbreak of epidemic," a doctor in Kenema, 240 kilometres east of the capital, told reporters. Deputy Defence Minister Hinga Norman, who heads a local militia allied to ECOMOG, said Kailahun would fall by the end of the year, giving "a Christmas present to the nation. After this, we will turn our military might to rebels in the north and crush them once and for all." Norman said the rebels, who allied themselves to a junta ousted in February, would be attacked in their strongholds in the north of the country. Supporters of the ousted junta together with the RUF have been accused of waging a campaign of terror against civilians in the east and north. With the national army disbanded, the security of Sierra Leone is almost entirely in the hands of ECOMOG.

Grenade blast at Colombo airport ahead of British minister's visit

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan arrested an airman following the apparently accidental firing of a rocket propelled grenade at the international airport shortly before the arrival Tuesday of a British minister, officials said. British Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett arrived shortly after the explosion caused panic at the Bandaranaike International Airport, officials said. Officials said they believed the grenade had been fired accidentally during a regular security exercise by airman guarding the airport and its immediate neighbourhood against attacks by Tamil Tiger guerrillas. Fatchett was originally due to arrive here Monday but the Air Lanka Airbus A-340 carrying him developed technical problems while flying over France and was forced to return to London. The British minister said he had a harrowing experience trying to travel with Sri Lanka's national carrier, which is managed by the Dubai-based airline Emirates. "It is a real test of stamina," Fatchett told reporters shortly after arriving here on his visit, which has been cut short by the delayed flight.

Take two aspirin pills and grow me in the morning

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch farmers whose slow-growing cucumbers have been causing them headaches have found a solution — aspirin. For the cucumbers, that is. Scientists with the respected Dutch research institute TNO have discovered that feeding aspirin to young cucumber plants helps prevent thickening of the root walls. Plants with thick root walls absorb water and minerals less easily than those with thin root walls, leading to slower growth. It was not immediately known how the aspirin is administered to the plants. "Aspirin doesn't remove the cause of the thickening, but it reduces the level of damage," plant physiologist Sjoukje Heimovaara told the Algemeen Dagblad newspaper for Tuesday's edition. Aspirin contains an acid also made naturally by plants to protect themselves. No trace of the aspirin was found in the cucumbers themselves. Researchers are now planning to extend their experiment to eggplants, tomatoes and peppers.

Cold weather in Moscow kills nine

MOSCOW (AP) — Cold weather in Moscow killed nine people over the past week, a news report said Tuesday. The nine died from hypothermia, while another 67 people suffered from overexposure and had to be hospitalised in the last week, the Interfax news agency reported. Temperatures in Moscow hovered around freezing through much of last week. Dozens of people die on the streets of Moscow each winter. Most of the victims are either homeless, or they pass out while drunk.



Cyprus Foreign Minister Ioannis Cassoulides (left) speaks during a news conference with his Austrian counterpart Wolfgang Schuessel at the ministers council's building in Brussels. The European Union moves to make concrete a phase of expansion talks with its six front-running candidates, pushing onwards despite EU members' disagreements over size and reforms needed for expansion (Reuters photo)

EU, six applicants open detailed negotiations

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union launched a new stage of its ambitious eastwards expansion plan Tuesday, opening detailed negotiations with the six front-running candidates.

"Today we opened the actual negotiations. Nothing can stop the train," Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel told a news conference after EU foreign ministers had met in Brussels, one of the six leading candidates for EU membership.

"It is a very important day for Cyprus," Foreign Minister Ioannis Cassoulides told the news conference, saying he hoped the talks would eventually embrace the divided island's Turkish part, which has declined an invitation to partici-

pate.

Separate meetings were to be held during the day with the other five front runners, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Estonia.

British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook said on arrival at the meeting that the event represented yet another milestone in the 15-nation bloc's plan to embrace the former Communist bloc and the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

Five other eastern European countries — Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria — are also waiting in the wings, having been put on a slower train to membership.

The first round of negotiations, which follows several months of scruti-

ny by applicants of the hundreds of thousands of pages of EU law, will cover seven areas where the candidates expect little difficulty in adapting to EU requirements.

In some areas, like education and research, no problems have been identified that need negotiating. Talks on more controversial sectors such as agriculture will start later.

The EU has embarked on detailed talks despite members' apparent lack of enthusiasm for speeding up expansion, because of the scale of the exercise and the difficulty of reforming the EU's financing and institutions to prepare it for a membership of 20 or more.

While Cassoulides told the news conference Cyprus believed it could enter the EU in 2003, EU

members, not least the new German government, are increasingly talking in terms of a first expansion in 2005 or 2006.

Pointing to a problem which many fear could overshadow the whole exercise, Cassoulides played down concerns expressed by four EU members Monday that if Cyprus entered the EU as a divided island, it could bring war to a bloc intended to keep the peace.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974, when Turkey invaded its northern third in reaction to a short-lived coup in Nicosia.

"We agree with the fact that there's a problem... The message should be addressed to the Turks. It should say that Turkey should not have a right of veto on Cyprus," he said.

U.N. urges autonomous government for East Timor

LISBON (AFP) — A United Nations proposal to resolve the dispute over East Timor includes plans for elections to an autonomous government as a first step on the road to self-determination, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

The proposal was put to Indonesia and Portugal last month at talks with Jamsheed Marker, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's personal representative for East Timor.

Details of the proposal were not revealed at the time and the two sides are due to meet again in New York from Nov. 19.

Marker, in an interview with the daily *Diario de Noticias* here, said Tuesday the proposal was based on: "An Indonesian proposition to give a large degree of autonomy to the territory except in the areas of defence, foreign affairs and fiscal policy."

He said the proposition had been welcomed by the United Nations.

"But we have decided to go further and prepare a more substantial document which could be accepted by both countries, whatever the final decision on the territory's status," he said.

"According to this document the Timorese can freely elect their autonomous government," Marker added.

Marker said all political forces would be able to take part in the election. "The important thing is to test the political situation."

"It could be that the Timorese prefer autonomy for a certain period and will later demand self-determination. But it is necessary first to see how autonomy works."

East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, was annexed by Jakarta in 1976 after Lisbon moved out.

Portugal favours independence for the territory.

The United Nations continues to regard Lisbon as the official administrator of East Timor and the U.N. has sponsored peace talks between Portugal and Indonesia since 1983.

The talks have gained momentum since the ouster of Indonesian President Suharto in May.

"I'm very satisfied with the progress that's so far been achieved. We have a great deal to do as yet and a long way to go, but the willingness to compromise and the atmosphere of negotiations is very positive," Marker said after October's talks.

The meeting at the United Nations was attended by the Indonesian Foreign Minister's Director General Nugroho Wisnumurti and Portugal's U.N. permanent representative Fernando Neves.

'No need to fear Berlin as German capital'

BONN (R) — Germany's neighbours have nothing to fear from the government's move to Berlin from Bonn next year, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said Tuesday.

"To some people, Berlin still sounds too Prussian, too authoritarian, too centralised," Schröder said in his inaugural speech.

"Our totally non-aggressive vision of a 'New Centre Republic' stands in the exact opposite of this," Schröder said.

Berlin symbolised the "New Centre Republic" as it lay at the heart of Germany and at the heart of Europe, he said.

The chancellor, who wants to accelerate the pace of the government's move to Berlin in early 1999, said the city was burdened with a dark chapter in German history but he wanted to demonstrate that there was another side to Berlin.

"Berlin also stands for...

an atmosphere of openness, which has made the city an attraction for youth and the cultural avant garde from all of Europe," he said.

The capital of the "New Centre Republic" would fill a very important cultural role, and he said his administration was introducing a minister for culture to gather together different cultural competencies.

He said a "worthy solution" would also be found to the controversial issue of a fitting Holocaust monument for Berlin.

Schröder has said previously that he favours a Holocaust study centre rather than a traditional stone monument to remember the six million Jews exterminated by the Nazis.

"Even with this historical context in mind, however, Berlin still represents totally different traditions other than a reminder of totalitarian rule," Schröder said.

OSCE verification mission in Kosovo slowly gets into place

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AFP) — The OSCE verification mission in Kosovo has been slow in getting into place in the province, with western officials Tuesday saying they expect its active deployment by the end of November.

Some 30 people, among them Americans, Britons, Russians, Swedes and Norwegians, have already started working in the general headquarters of the mission in Pristina, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's spokesman Duncan Bullivant told AFP.

This mission is to verify the application of the Oct. 13 accord reached between Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and U.S. envoy Richard Holbrooke, especially the agreed withdrawal of Belgrade's special forces and the return of displaced people to their homes.

"Wednesday, Ambassador (William) Walker will arrive and with him his principal deputies" to accelerate the deployment of the KVM, Bullivant said.

Western officials in Pristina reckon that the OSCE mission will become actively operational by the end of November.

The first members of the so-called KVM (Kosovo Verification Mission) have begun working in collaboration with the members of the Kosovo Diplomatic Observing Mission (KDOM), which has been deployed in the province

since July.

"The verifiers arriving on the ground are still technically members of the KDOM. The verification mission can only start when there is a total agreement on the shape, size and budget requirements of the headquarters," Bullivant said.

Right now, "there are about one hundred people involved in monitoring on the ground. By the end of the week that figure will grow up to about 200," Bullivant said.

Around 90 Americans are still in Belgrade, waiting to be transferred to Pristina, while 16 French were to arrive in the Yugoslav capital Tuesday.

Forty British verifiers, as well as Italian officials, were expected to arrive during the week on their way to Pristina, Bullivant said.

The KVM officials are meeting on a daily basis with the members of four KDOM teams currently present in the province — U.S., British, European Union and Russian observers.

Members of these four KDOM teams will be absorbed in the KVM when it becomes operational, Bullivant said.

One of the reasons for the relatively slow deployment of the KVM is the fact that all the important decisions over its actions should be made by a consensus of the 54 OSCE member countries.

The logistics and infrastructure in Kosovo, one of the most undeveloped regions in Yugoslavia, also

fails to meet the needs of the KVM.

When it is established, the KVM will verify whether all the aspects of Milosevic-Holbrooke accord are respected — pullout of the security forces, the situation in the media, humanitarian problems or border incidents.

The KVM teams will be deployed throughout the province. They will sometimes spend the night in troublesome areas, where their presence is supposed to comfort the local population.

"The priority at the moment is the building of confidence" among the Kosovo population and speeding up the solution of humanitarian problems, Bullivant said.

But the mission will be also involved in the search for a political solution to the difficult issue of the future status of the Serbian province and its 90 per cent Albanian majority, which has been demanding independence.

This option has been rejected both by Belgrade and western leaders.

Indirect negotiations between Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanians through the mediation of U.S. envoy Christopher Hill have been going on for months, with the two sides still far apart.

When reached, an accord will involve elections at different levels in the province, and the OSCE will be involved in these, Bullivant said.

Studies suggest herbal remedy eases problems of prostate enlargement

CHICAGO (AP) — Research suggests that an herbal remedy popular for treating prostate problems works without the side effects of traditional drugs, though experts cautioned that more tests are needed.

Berries from the saw palmetto tree have been used to treat symptoms caused by the enlargement of the prostate gland by the Seminole Indians in Florida as far back as the 1700s, according to a report in Wednesday's *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Saw palmetto is used far

more than prescription drugs in Europe to treat noncancerous prostate enlargement, but its chemical mechanism is unknown.

In the report, doctors reviewed 18 studies of saw palmetto use involving 2,939 patients with benign prostate enlargement, which causes difficulty urinating in many men over 50. The trials ranged from four to 48 weeks.

Men taking saw palmetto extracts were nearly twice as likely to report improvements in symptoms than men taking placebos, said

researchers led by Dr. Timothy Wilt of the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Centre.

When compared with finasteride, a prostate-shrinking prescription drug marketed in the United States as Proscar, saw palmetto provided similar relief with fewer side effects, including impotence, the review found.

But "our results should be viewed with caution," the authors said. Few studies reported their findings in standardised ways, most were brief and they involved varying doses and

combinations of saw palmetto with other plant-based compounds.

None of the studies compared saw palmetto with the most commonly used prostate drugs, a class called alpha blockers that relax prostate muscles and are marketed in the United States as Cardura, Flomax and Hytrin.

The authors called for further research, and an expert not involved in the review agreed.

"I tell my own patients that saw palmetto is harmless, that there's a suggestion that it may improve

symptoms, but we don't really know with certainty," said the expert, Dr. John McConnell, a spokesman for the American Urological Association.

McConnell, also chair of urology at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas, advised against taking remedies with multiple ingredients besides saw palmetto that are now being marketed as "prostate pills."

Such preparations "have not been evaluated at all," he said.

Release of Rwanda genocide suspects sparks fierce debate

KIGALI (AFP) — The imminent release of 10,000 genocide suspects has sparked a fierce debate in Rwanda between those bent on ending the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of the 1994 slaughter and those who want to put the hellish events behind them.

With local elections due at the end of the year, there are also suggestions that the releases, the date of which has yet to be set, form part of a political strategy.

Early last month, the government, which had already freed some 1,500 prisoners for reasons of advanced age, sickness or incomplete paperwork, announced the forthcoming release of a further 10,000 of the 125,695 people accused of taking part

in the 1994 massacre of up to 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus.

Some of the 10,000 accused of minor offences have already spent more than four years in jail — longer than the sentences they would have received if they were eventually found guilty.

Documentation pertaining to others is incomplete. "Keeping them in prison is illegal," said Boubou Diabira of *Avocats sans Frontières* (ASF — Lawyers without Borders).

"The number involved is very difficult to estimate, but their discharge would doubtless free up the prisons a bit," he added.

The large number of detainees has caused serious problems of overcrowding in

Rwandan jails.

The association of genocide survivors, *Ibuka* ("Remember" in Kinyarwanda) warned that freeing the 10,000 suspects risked "perpetuating the culture of impunity."

"Not having a dossier doesn't mean they are innocent, especially as most of those without dossiers were caught red-handed in 1994," said Ibuka vice chairman Joseph Kayijaho.

Rwandan newspapers have charged that the decision was a political one designed to win support for the government in local council elections due at the end of the year.

Strongman Paul Kagame, Rwanda's vice president and defence minister, declared:

"The judicial process goes hand-in-hand with a political process established to create conditions favouring the moral healing of the population."

Kagame led the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) former rebels who ousted Hutu then government troops and extremist militias held largely to blame for the genocide before the RPF seized Kigali in July 1994.

The upkeep of the prisoners costs around \$27 million a year, with three-quarters of the funds coming from abroad.

Agencies such as Penal Reform International are working with the government to look at putting prisoners to work to generate some income and also pro-

vide them with training so they can get jobs when they are eventually discharged.

Rwandan courts have already handed down more than 100 death sentences.

On April 24, firing squads executed 22 convicts in public at five sites around the country.

An international court set up in November 1994 by the United Nations is trying suspected ringleaders of the genocide in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha, but it has been widely criticised for proceeding slowly.

The maximum penalty it can impose is life imprisonment, but so far it has only handed down one sentence and made two convictions, while 32 people are held in the Arusha cells.

Russia fighting to prolong Mir's life

MOSCOW (R) — With just 10 days until the launch of the first International Space Station module, Russian officials are showing growing reluctance to bring down their 12-year-old Mir space station.

Wednesday, top Russian space officials will meet to decide whether the new station should be launched into an orbit closer to Mir, allowing astronauts to salvage some of its equipment for the new station.

Some analysts say the possible change is a ruse to prolong Mir's life past next June, when Russia, whose government is basically bankrupt, promised to bring it down and concentrate its very limited resources on the new station.

In a time of economic depression in Russia and food aid from abroad, its space station still distinguishes the country positively from other nations, analysts said.

The United States has pressed Russia to retire Mir as soon as possible because delays in building the living quarters of the new station have already put the arrival of the first crew back to January 2000, a year and a

half later than planned.

Mir experienced a near-disastrous collision in 1997, and was hit by a number of technical problems in the months following the incident.

Monday Boris Bodin, head of the Russian Space Agency's long-term planning department, acknowledged that Moscow may keep Mir flying longer than earlier announced, until several months after the arrival of the living quarters module in July 1999.

"There is nothing crafty in this," he told Reuters. "Our thinking is based on assuring the long-term presence of man in space."

The chief lobbyist for Mir is the Energiya rocket corporation, which built and owns the orbiting laboratory. "Of course everyone at Energiya is in favour of keeping Mir flying," said an aide to the deputy director.

Some Russian space officials appear to be having trouble moving from a national focus to the International Space Station, which brings together Russia, the United States, Europe, Japan and Canada in a \$60 billion effort.

The first Zarya module of the station is set for launch on Nov. 20. In its Wednesday review, Russian officials said they expect to decide whether to delay the launch by 10 hours to put it in the same orbital plane as the new station.

Sharing the same orbital plane would make it much easier to transfer equipment from Mir, although NASA, the leading partner in the new station, had not planned to use Mir transports.

"Of course we should be prepared to use any scientific potential we have on Mir," said Alexei Kravtsov, deputy head of the Russian Space Agency's international cooperation department.

"If we have the possibility to remove equipment from Mir and use it on the International Space Station, then we should do it, because it will save money."

"This is not old equipment — there are some completely new things there," he added.

Kyle Herring, a NASA spokesman, said the U.S. space agency had yet to agree to the last-minute Russian change in plans, but would make a decision this week.

كندا من الجاهل

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Let sanity prevail

THE CURRENT standoff between Iraq and the U.N. Security Council is poised to escalate into another military conflict unless restraint and sanity prevail. Iraq is not the first nor the last country in the world to defy a U.N. resolution, and the international community must not appear so callously selective in the administration of international justice. The rule of thumb in international relations is that whenever there is a conflict or dispute, right and wrong are rarely seen just in black and white.

The Security Council has reason to be concerned about Iraq's refusal to cooperate with UNSCOM. On the other hand, Iraqis have cause for concern about the suffocation of their country for nearly a decade. The sanctions regime slammed on Iraq is in itself questionable under international law, and the Security Council is not at liberty to apply punishments that violate basic human rights. Several U.N. specialised agencies have questioned the morality of prolonged sanctions even when they are imposed by the international organisation. Sanctions contravene the human rights of people for food, medicine, development, freedom to travel, education and above all freedom to lead a normal and healthy life. The Food and Agriculture Organisation, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, World Health Organisation, and scores of human rights bodies have severely criticised the crippling and prolonged sanctions against Cuba, Libya and Iraq. The international community is called upon not only to address Iraq's flouting of U.N. resolutions but also the implication of the world body's resolutions on the peoples affected by them.

This much the Security Council has failed to do until now, opting to turn a deaf ear to such humanitarian pleadings. No one would wish to absolve Iraq of its responsibilities under international resolutions. The Iraqi authorities did in fact cooperate with UNSCOM for several years and this fact proves that under appropriate conditions this kind of cooperation can be resumed and maintained. It is not far-fetched to think that another visit to Iraq by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan would broker another deal with Baghdad.

The secretary general did succeed where everyone else failed when last February he stitched together an accord with Iraq to open up its presidential palaces for inspection. Of course, now we know that all the fuss artificially made about these sites proved ill-conceived, even mischievous. Military action against Iraq by the U.S. and Britain and their allies must not be taken unless approved by the Security Council. A more balanced perspective on the whole situation is a must before anybody lifts a finger one way or another. From an Arab perspective, Iraq remains an Arab country and no Arab would wish to see any more killings of Iraqis.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Rai's Fahed Faneh said a new economic reform programme will start by the year 1999, because the current programme has failed to achieve what was expected. Faneh expected the upcoming programme to be a follow up to the previous one, and will, according to Faneh, tackle the following subjects: The privatisation of government institutions involved in production that serves industry, telecommunications, transportation, hotels; privatising the government's share in public share companies; reengineering underperforming sectors such as health, water and aviation; reducing the budget deficit — expected to reach eight per cent this year; and create an economic growth rate faster than the population growth rate in order to safeguard society from further deterioration. The three-year programme will also focus on combating social ills such as poverty and unemployment, said Faneh, and begin preparing the country for partnership with the European Union and the World Trade Organisation by increasing the capability of production sectors to a competitive level. Finally, the programme will develop a social security package aimed at increasing productivity through developing infrastructure, upgrading services and the quality of life in rural areas, Faneh predicted.

Al Dustour's Onib Rintawi commented on the recent stand-off between Iraq and the United Nations. The writer said Iraq has halted cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) for disarming Iraq, basing its chances of success on factors such as worldwide sympathy for the human suffering in Iraq, what Baghdad perceives to be the weakness of an American administration burdened with a string of fiascos, and the collapse of the anti-Iraq allies. Iraq is also counting on the economic and political improvement of its relations with some Arab countries for regional support, said Rintawi. But all of these factors need to be reviewed carefully by the Iraqi leadership, said Rintawi, because most of them are not as effective as they may have appeared.

Washington Watch

Winners and losers in the U.S. elections

Dr. James J. Zogby

THE 1998 ELECTIONS are over and the Republican Party remains in control of both the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. They also maintain a commanding lead in the number of states where Republican governors are in control. Look at the numbers. Before November 3, Republicans held 32 gubernatorial seats, Democrats held 17 and one state had an independent governor. Now, there are 31 Republicans, 17 Democrats and two independent governors. The numbers in the U.S. Senate remain 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats, while in the House of Representatives the shift was from 228 Republicans to 206 Democrats (with 1 Independent), to 223 Republicans to 211 Democrats (with 1 Independent).

And yet despite retaining control, Republicans will spend the next several months engaging in a fructious internal party blood bath since many correctly view the 1998 results as a defeat.

This is because below the surface of the numbers are some striking victories and defeats that warrant closer examination in order to assess the real outcome of the November 3rd contests. After months of focus on the scandal in Washington, Republicans were hoping for a sweeping mandate in November. They hoped to make the elections a referendum on the president's integrity. Since the party of the president historically loses 30 seats in an off year election, Republicans were seeking gains of at least that many seats in the Congress and as many as five gains in the Senate. This would have given them a commanding control of both houses of Congress and the ability to set the nation's agenda for the next two years.

In fact, Republicans focused so extensively on the president's problems that they failed to articulate any other political message for their 1998 political platform. From August through September, Republican congressmen and candidates became a national chorus calling on Clinton to resign. This was followed by Republican-led votes in the Congress to release embarrassing details of the investigation against the president and finally a vote to begin impeachment proceedings in November.

Through all this President Clinton, though obviously distracted by the scandal, continued to maintain that he was focusing on the "people's business." He lost important votes on campaign finance reform and health care reform, but finally succeeded at the last minute in getting Congress to agree to approve a budget that contained much of what he had sought in education spending, environmental protection and Social Security. Clinton then swung from this victory to nine days of negotiations at the Wye Plantation which ended with a widely covered White House signing ceremony. Thus in two critical weeks before the election Clinton transformed press treatment of his presidency. He emerged as a leader with both a domestic and foreign policy agenda.

In the president's absence from the campaign trail, Vice-President Gore, First Lady Hillary Clinton and strong Democratic leaders like Jesse Jackson cross-coded the country appearing at Democratic Party events, raising money for their candidates and mobilising voters for November 3.

The fact that Democrats were able to turn what was expected to be a stunning defeat into a virtual draw is largely due to the efforts of the Democratic leaders.

In any assessment of 1998's winners and losers, then, the president, vice president, first lady and Jesse Jackson must be listed among the big winners of the year.

Clinton has, at least for now, salvaged his Presidency. While the impeachment process will probably run its course, barring any new developments, the momentum of this process has been seriously weakened.

Republicans will now be hesitant to be seen as too aggressive

and Democrats will not abandon their leader.

Gore and the First Lady earned tremendous credits as campaigners with many Democrats owing their victories to their assistance.

Jesse Jackson focused, as he has so often in the past, on mobilising African American voters. They were the decisive factor in several big Democratic victories. In fact, African Americans are also big winners in 1998. In southern states, where Republicans have gained such tremendous strength in the past 10 years, African American voters stopped Republicans in their tracks. By increasing their voter turnout in key states and by voting over 90 per cent for Democrats, African Americans helped Democrats win back governorships in South Carolina and Georgia and also defeated a Republican incumbent Senator in North Carolina.

African Americans and Jesse Jackson will be in a position to demand strong consideration from the Democratic Party in 2000.

Two other important winners in 1998 were the sons of former President George Bush. George W. Bush was reelected as Governor of Texas by a huge margin and Jeb Bush won as Governor of Florida also by a substantial margin. Both Bushes' victories are impressive, not only because they won control of two of the nation's largest states, but because in their victories they built broad coalitions that included substantial numbers of Hispanic voters and even large numbers of African American supporters. By developing what some are calling a "compassionate conservatism" and reaching out to minority voters, the Bush brothers' victories may point the way to broader Republican successes in the future.

George W. Bush has always been seen as a more moderate style Republican, but Jeb's victory in Florida points to another winner in 1998.

Moderation won more elections this year, while extremism was the big loser. In 1994, Jeb Bush lost his first race to be Florida's governor by running as a conservative ideologue. This year, he and several other Republicans and many victorious Democrats ran successful races by moving away from ideological extremes and developing a more centrist message.

The final winner of 1998 was the practice of GOTV: "get out the vote."

This was the first off-year election where both parties spent over \$1 billion in campaigning. Advertising, mostly negative, and high priced political consultants used up most of that money. In the last week of the campaign, however, both parties spent their energies on old-fashioned direct voter contact in an intensive effort to get supporters out to vote. Arab Americans were part of this effort as well, and it worked. While the turnout was a low 35.7 per cent of registered voters — the lowest since 1942 — the numbers were higher than expected because of the last minute GOTV efforts.

If any lesson is learned from 1998, one hopes that it is that more effort should be given to mobilising and encouraging voters and less spent on negative advertising that discourages voters from participating.

The biggest loser in 1998 was of course, Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich. It was he who orchestrated the Republican strategy of impeachment as a campaign platform. Even during the last week of the campaign when it had already been shown that most Americans were not going to base their vote on their attitude toward the president, Gingrich authorised the spending of \$10 million on a targeted national advertising campaign that focused on the president's scandal. The strategy backfired and angered his Republican colleagues, one of whom said "we were

out in our districts trying finally to focus the election on issues and Gingrich comes in and tries to remind the voters of what they didn't want to hear about."

For his failed strategy, Gingrich was forced to resign. Not only did Gingrich lose, but impeachment, as an issue, lost in 1998.

So did meanness in advertising and the divisive politics of campaign consultants like Arthur Finkelstein. Finkelstein has long been an architect of right wing ideological campaigning. In addition to his American clients, he was the campaign consultant behind Benjamin Netanyahu's 1996 victory in Israel. He lost in two critical races this year: Republican Senators Al D'Amato of New York and Lauch Faircloth of North Carolina were Finkelstein clients, and both were defeated.

Another consultant who lost big elections was Ralph Reed, former head of the right-wing fundamentalist Christian Coalition. Two of his fundamentalist clients, the Republican Governors of Alabama and South Carolina, Fob James and David Beasley, were defeated in reelection attempts.

A final loser in 1998 was the State of California. Overshadowing the victory of Democrat Gray Davis as governor was the failure of California voters to overturn an arcane law that will make California irrelevant in 2000's presidential primaries.

California has had a Republican governor for 16 years and so one cannot underestimate the significance of the victory of a Democrat in this huge state that has 12 per cent of the nation's voters (and over 20 per cent of the electoral votes needed to win a presidential election). But California recently decided to move the date of its presidential primary election to March of 2000 so that it could also use its enormous clout to play a critical role in choosing both parties' nominees.

However, in order to facilitate this effort, California's voters needed to pass a state-wide referendum to change their primary elections. The referendum failed and so California's 2000 primary will be inconsequential, unless the state's parties' leaders can succeed in a difficult court challenge to change the law.

These were the winners and losers of 1998. But no discussion of November's elections can be complete without some mention of the Arab American vote in November.

All six Arab American congressional incumbents were reelected. Three Arab American challengers were defeated, but all ran strong races in which they netted more than 43 per cent of the vote. Jean Shaheen was reelected as governor of New Hampshire as were 26 other Arab Americans running for state and local offices.

In targeted states, Arab American GOTV efforts paid off turning out a substantial number of voters on election day. A Michigan congressman called me to note that the Arab American vote turnout was much higher than any other group in his area and was the decisive factor in winning the election of a candidate for the State Senate.

In Illinois, Virginia, California, Pennsylvania and Ohio, as well, Arab American vote efforts were noted by politicians and party leaders. Not only did Arab Americans use phone banks and advertising in newspapers, radio and television to mobilise their voters, but both the Democratic and Republican parties used paid advertising and paid canvassers to compete for Arab American voters in these elections.

Thus the Arab American strategy for 1998 succeeded — Arab American candidates won. Arab American voters turned out in large numbers and, in critical states, Arab Americans secured their place in electoral coalition building efforts for the 2000 elections.

Arab cool versus U.S. policy

By George S. Hishmeh

THE LATEST showdown with Iraq over its defiant position on arms inspections will once again test Arab governments' willingness to join any possible U.S.-led move to force compliance by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

In the previous confrontation last winter, the Arab governments declined to follow the U.S. lead, arguing that they could not possibly join hands with the Clinton administration since Israel, too, was being obstructionist, threatening to derail the Mideast peace process. But pro-Israel groups here have long taken umbrage at this line of thinking and can now be expected to challenge Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to try and bring around Arab allies following the Clinton administration's successful negotiation of the Wye memorandum.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan defused last February's crisis which saw the United States on the brink of military action. And Iraq consequently was hoping this would lead to the lifting of U.N. sanctions, now in their eighth year.

Some here may have high expectations as a result of Clinton's signing into law Saturday before last of the "Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998" in which, at the behest of Congress, the Clinton administration is mandated to support "those elements of the Iraqi opposition that advocate a very different future for Iraq than the bitter reality of internal repression and external aggression that the current regime in Baghdad now offers." But all indications to date are that the Clinton administration is opting for a diplomatic approach. This could precipitate another American push for broad Arab backing, coming on the heels of the one undertaken in the last two weeks (but without much success) for the Arab World to jump on the Palestinian-Israeli bandwagon following their agreement at Wye Plantation.

Whether the Arabs would be more forthcoming on Iraq remains to be seen but American disappointment with early Arab "stiffness" vis-a-vis the Wye accord was unwarranted.

At every occasion since the signing of the Wye memorandum on October 23, American officials, particularly those engaged in Mideast diplomacy, have repeated Albright's theme that the Mideast peace process was not "a spectator sport." U.S. allies in the Arab

World, and elsewhere, were told of the need to rally around to give the Israelis aid, as one official reportedly said, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu especially, a sense that "sacrifice" on their part will be rewarded.

This view was communicated by Secretary Albright in telephone calls to Arab foreign ministers and Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk to Arab ambassadors. Briefings were held exclusively for reporters working for Mideastern papers.

Aaron Miller, deputy U.S. peace coordinator, said as much at the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine on Tuesday. The significance of Wye Memorandum, he stressed, is that "now there is a future for Israeli-Palestinian

multilateral peace process." U.S. dissatisfaction with the Arab wait-and-see attitude is defended vigorously by Arab diplomats here and spokesman for Arab-American groups who were also invited by Secretary Albright to an unprecedented meeting at her offices with their American Jewish counterparts.

She expressed hope that the two communities, according to a participant, would form "a peace constituency" that backs the peace process.

But several Arab-American participants attributed Arab tepidness to the "lack of reciprocity and symmetry in the agreement and to the inconsistency of U.S. policy which demands normalisation from the Arab side while failing to normalise American relations with the Palestinians who remain on the terrorist list in spite of their cooperation in the peace negotiations." (Miller, reminded of this, said the administration is looking into this issue but he did not reveal U.S. thinking).

Khalil Jahshan, president of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), argues that Netanyahu "has done little in recent days to improve his image in Arab eyes and alleviate Arab suspicions and concerns about his real intentions." Jahshan, who was at the meeting with Albright along with nine Arab-American groups, says: "Indeed, since his return to Israel from the Wye River talks he has taken every opportunity to raise red flags about his alleged conversion to the peace process" at Wye.

Jahshan cited several negative statements made by the Israeli prime minister, and the State Department was on record Monday as expressing concern about Israeli plans to expand the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba near Hebron. Current Israeli plans on Jabal Abu Ghneim or Har Homa are raising some eyebrows here as well.

The Wye memorandum states that "neither side shall initiate or take any step that will change the status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in accordance with the interim agreement." In light of this Israeli waffling, Secretary Albright and her key aides ought to appreciate Arab reluctance to rush to judgement and be content with the Egyptian view that it was a step in the right direction.

'Palestinians remain on the U.S. terrorist list in spite of their cooperation in the peace negotiations'

LETTERS

Best wishes

To the editor:

YOUR MAJESTY King Hussein: The Sayegh family of New York prays for your continued health and happiness. We hope you are doing well and can return home to your family soon. God bless you and our beautiful country, Jordan.

We also wish you a Happy Birthday and many more to come.

Dr. Nabil Sayegh and family
 Rockland County
 NY
 US

From the Federal Ministry for Justice in FR Yugoslavia

The following statement was sent to the Jordan Times from the embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in reply to the Jordan Times editorial of November 9th, "Unacceptable behaviour." The statement was issued on November 10th by the Federal Ministry for Justice in FR Yugoslavia.

SOME MEDIA have reported that the prosecutor and the president of the Hague's Ad Hoc Tribunal for former Yugoslavia, Louise Arbour and Gabrielle Kirk McDonald will not visit Belgrade and participate at the International Conference on Ad Hoc Tribunal on former Yugoslavia since FR Yugoslavia has allegedly refused to grant them entry visas.

This information is completely baseless and untrue. The Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Holland has issued the visas for President Kirk McDonald, for Prosecutor Arbour and her Deputy Graham Bluit, as well as to their nine associates since they intended to visit Yugoslavia and to participate at International Conference on Ad Hoc Tribunal on former Yugoslavia.

It is up to the official of the Hague's Ad Hoc Tribunal for former Yugoslavia whether they will use the granted visas or not, as well as what information they will present to media. But they cannot claim that they have been refused visas and denied entry to Yugoslavia.

Regarding Yugoslavia's cooperation with the Ad Hoc Tribunal in Hague, the official Yugoslav position has been stated in the letter of the Federal Minister for Justice Zoran Knezevic to Prosecutor Arbour. This position is the principle one since in the case of Kosovo and Metohija there are no war-conflicts and the state has legitimate right to act, as well as to prevent and suppress terrorism.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Features
 Clinton's
 By Fintan O'Toole

ANSWERING questions about life or explaining his public life has always been a challenge for Clinton. He has been asked to explain his actions, his decisions, his feelings. He has been asked to explain his actions, his decisions, his feelings. He has been asked to explain his actions, his decisions, his feelings.

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This is the first time that a three-part series has been published in the Jordan Times. The series is a collection of articles on the African continent, written by a group of African writers. The series is a collection of articles on the African continent, written by a group of African writers.

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Clinton's let-off by voters reveals a new tolerance

By Fintan O'Toole

WHETHER ANSWERING questions about his private life or explaining his public policies, his instinct has always been to tell people what he thinks they want to hear. And yet, without meaning to, he has just challenged some powerful assumptions. He has forced Americans to admit, as they did in last week's mid-term elections, that they are not as righteous as conservatives like to think they are. He has revealed that the real moral majority is made up, not of religious zealots but of confused people doing their best to come to terms with the perplexing diversity of human desires. He has brought into the open the dark secret of modern morality: that people are not all that anxious to be scandalised.

Most commentators agree that Clinton was not the issue in the elections. That is in itself astounding.

Since January, his affair with Monica Lewinsky has dominated the news. He has suffered personal disgrace on an unprecedented scale. His nasty little secrets have been magnified into affairs of state. His most embarrassing moments have been fed into the all-devouring maw of the worldwide web. He has been the victim of an attempted coup d'état conducted not with tanks and helicopters but the more devastating weapons of shame and humiliation.

Accepted logic suggested that this coup must succeed. That was based on certain

assumptions about the feelings of "ordinary people" out there somewhere beyond the reaches of the political and media establishments. Whatever these ordinary people might feel and believe, they surely could not bear to think of Clinton's pathetic need for gratification, or to picture their president as an overgrown schoolboy pleasuring himself in the White House toilets. They could not help being so disgusted that their sheer revulsion would overwhelm all political judgement.

Clearly, however, they can help it. While much of the media and the political elite continues to work from a narrow notion of what is and is not acceptable to the general public, a new moral majority has been emerging, not just in the U.S. but in most Western democracies. It is not, as conservatives would characterise it, decadent, amoral or so mesmerised by consumerism that it can't be bothered to distinguish right from wrong.

But it has lost faith in saints and heroes. It has given up on the illusion that there is such a thing as a perfect human being and that if we can only find these people and elect them to office, everything will be okay. It hopes for moral rectitude but doesn't necessarily expect it. It is glad of goodness, but is not automatically contemptuous of failure. It is, oddly enough, rather taken with the old religious ideal of hating the sin but loving the sinner. And it has somehow concluded that morality is not the same as self-righteousness, that tolerance and compassion are moral virtues too.

Consider, for a moment, the following scenario. A Labour minister, regarded as a happily married man, visits a part of a public park that is known as a gay pick-up spot. The police get involved.

Confused, enigmatic accounts of the event become public knowledge. The minister, looking haggard and hollow-eyed, appears on television, barely able to mumble his way through a rehearsed statement. He resigns and his public career is effectively over.

This happened — four years ago in holy Catholic Ireland. Except that the minister in question, Emmett Stagg, did not resign and was not forced out. In a country which is still the most religious in western Europe, there was a feeling that he should not be destroyed. He stayed in office. Two years later his rural and small-town constituents re-elected him.

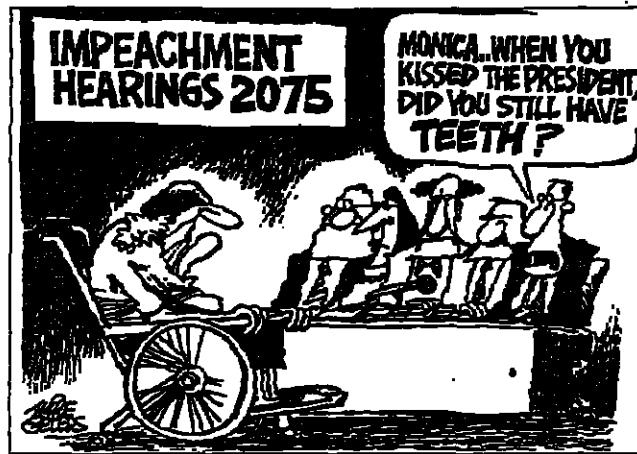
What is happening throughout the West is simply that people have been exposed to a much broader range of human behaviour than before. We used to carry in our heads a rough-and-ready distinction.

There were normal people and weirdos. The normal people got married, had children and kept their problems to themselves. The weirdos appeared to the normal people only in the law courts and the scandal sheets. Most of what they did was criminal; the rest was so wonderfully strange that it merited banner headlines in the tabloid papers. By definition, normal people were not weirdos and weirdos were not normal. But it hasn't been like that

for a long time now. On the one hand, because we now talk about child abuse, for instance, we have learnt to question the appearance of normality. On the other, the law no longer automatically defines sexual behaviour that departs from the supposed norm as criminal perversion. Popular culture, in the U.S. and elsewhere, has become wildly confessional.

Every variety of sexuality is displayed in the endless carnival of daytime TV. Yesterday's weirdos are today's guests on Oprah.

Millions of ordinary parents have discovered that their nice, caring son or smart, respectable daughter is homosexual. Millions have lived through adultery, separation and divorce. People still experience pain and disillusion through all the vagaries of sexual desire. But the sky has not fallen in. Even those who regard homosexuality, for instance, as a grave sin have noticed that fire and brimstone are not raining down on Greenwich Village. A minority of religious obsessives may think of all this as the end of the world, but most people have concluded that even if they don't like what other people do with each other's bodies, they can live with it. It's not that the citizens are now less moral, merely that they are less glib and less hypocritical. They have revised their expectations of leadership down-



wards, from exemplary goodness to an acceptable level of badness. They have concluded that morality is seldom plain and never simple and indecent things are often done by decent people.

Even for the Christian right in the U.S., the really outrageous thing about Clinton is not that he commits adultery; it is that, because he persists in getting caught and yet surviving, he has destroyed the pleasant fiction that respectable people would never tolerate a known sinner in the highest office.

He has reminded us that these days a lot of sinners are respectable people.

— The Independent

Cures for colonialism in Africa rest on common market

Editors note: This is the third of a three-part series examining Euro-African relationship, the hangover from colonialism, and the steps forward for the African continent, so often neglected and forgotten.

By John Gay Yoh

IT WOULD seem from the preceding discussion that, in those countries without direct colonial experience, for example Liberia, but with contact with the West, intellectual leaders have tended to drop traditional values and adopt Western values. In those countries colonised by the West, however, an early trend towards identification with the West has been reversed by many thinkers and become a reaffirmation of modified traditions. The Westernising process in Africa is thus a three-century old process. It officially began in the middle of the eighteenth century; then reached its peak in the early nineteenth century, where it found its most extreme examples among Western educated African Christian missionaries such as Abbe Boilat of Senegal and Bishop Crowther of Nigeria. Then later on in the century, uncritical acceptance of Western values appeared again among the first generation of "school people" in Cape Colony prominent among them being John Tengo Jabara. Around 1900, a new group of Westerners joined in, pioneered by J. Mengah Sarbah, S.R.B. Huh-Ahuma of the Gold Coast (Ghana), and Rev. Nemechiah Tile in South Africa. Unlike the Western intellectuals, the African intellectuals reacted to Western colonialism in different ways.

It is necessary therefore, that African poets, philosophers, scientists and politicians redirect their efforts to recover for their continent the confidence shattered by the legacy of slavery, colonialism, and false history. Inasmuch as Africans are eager to regain their glorious past, their thoughts should also focus on their immediate environment: they should maintain good relations with their neighbours, the Arabs and friends, the Asians and Americans, and should reconcile with the Europeans. The new reconciliation with Europe should take the form of real partnership in socio-economic and political affairs for the benefit of the two nations. In order to do that, Africans and Europeans

should pay little attention to whatever French or British or German historians wrote over three hundred years ago. But how can this envisaged new partnership be maintained and consolidated?

It is true that during the last three decades, several positive attempts were made to forge new ties for political and economic cooperation between Europe and Africa. The Commonwealth organisation, for example, which groups together almost all the former British colonies, is one of such attempts by the Europeans to create a new type of political partnership. However, the African members in the organisation had not been, in any practical manner, influential enough to impose their political agenda or pressure on the policies of the Commonwealth.

Another initiative taken to strengthen the Afro-European cooperation was through the Lomé Convention. This convention was inaugurated on February 28, 1975, with the intention to symbolise a new era in relations between the industrialised countries of the western Europe and the Third World. It was hailed as a success of North-South cooperation. In fact, it was meant to facilitate inter-regional trade and other economic exchanges between EU, African, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP).

Unfortunately, the Lomé Convention has been described by many critics as a neo-colonial device to maintain a relationship of dependence between Europe and Africa or another mechanism for updating dependence of the African countries on their former colonial powers. It is described also as neo-colonial in tone, and perpetuates the client status of Africa. Indeed, some went as far as saying that the convention is representative of traditional spheres of influence and bloc politics, thus it presumes the role of the African countries as producers of raw materials and agricultural products, permitting in the final analysis, the emergence of a new international division of labour. In other words, Lomé constitutes a new and subtle kind of subjugation of the African states, making it difficult for them to industrialise and achieve the much needed diversification of economies. One would be tempted to say that Lomé, like the Treaty of Berlin, seeks to keep

Africa safe for European interests against non-European challenges.

It would seem therefore that, over the years, the "Lomé culture" of partnership has lost much of its soul and practical effect. Thus, there seems to be no doubt that the negotiations for post-Lomé will be faced with the question of defining a new approach to partnership. There is a need to add new partnership principles such as selectivity, differentiation and flexibility, in addition to the old principles adopted such as dialogue, "contractuality" and predictability. Another pressing question would be, in addition to aid, what can the EU do as a partner to defend the interest of ACP countries in international fora such as the World Trade Organisation, Bretton Woods, Club of Paris? There is also a need to examine mechanisms to overcome current management problems in the use of different instruments such as Stabex, Symin and Structural Adjustment facility.

What Africa need is a new agreement which would first of all, contribute to Africa's efforts to create a single regional market for goods, services, capital and labour. Secondly, the agreement should provide incentive for small African countries to participate in and benefit from such continental markets. Thirdly, the new treaty should support Africa's efforts to create conducive environment for private foreign investment by expanding infrastructure. Fourth, the envisaged agreement should contribute to on-going efforts to promote cross-border investments by African and foreign investors. Finally, the agreement should provide incentives to encourage the emerging Africa's private sector to improve and extend their operations, especially in cross-border trade. There is no doubt that an agreement with such features will contribute to the improvement of productivity and will increase the competitiveness in African countries and hence improve the deteriorated political and socio-economic and political ties between Europe and Africa. It might also bring to close three centuries history of mistrust and hatred.

The writer is a visiting fellow at the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Amman. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

Global Village



DiCaprio's latest film is under fire from environmentalists (file photo)

Hollywood agent defends film against environmental protests

Associated Press

A THAI agent is defending the shooting of a Hollywood movie against protests from environmentalists who say a tropical island will be deluged by tourists.

Despite an outcry, the Thai government has permitted 20th Century Fox to film "The Beach," starring Leonardo DiCaprio inside a national park early next year.

Santa Pestanj, the local production coordinator for the movie, was quoted in The Nation as saying there would be "minimal or no environmental impacts on the island and coral reefs around it." He said the Hollywood film crew were friends of the environment who "love and care about natural resources more than the Thais." The filming has set off a controversy because southern Thailand's Phi Phi Island is a national park which already attracts large crowds and illegal tourist developers.

A high-profile Hollywood movie, environmentalists say, would only increase tourism and the

filming itself would disturb the fragile tropical ecosystem.

The film-makers plan to replant some 100 coconut trees and temporarily remove some vegetation to broaden one of the island's beaches for a football playing scene.

Under an agreement with the Thai government, which approved the shooting last month, 20th Century Fox will place a \$132,000 deposit as guarantee against any damage inflicted on the environment.

The film, starring DiCaprio, will improve Thailand's tourism industry and bring a lot of money to the country. The public and media should not attack it," Santa was quoted as saying.

He said 20th Century Fox had threatened to change the location of the shooting if there was a strong public reaction against it. Santa has acted as production coordinator for virtually every major Hollywood film shot in Thailand in recent times.

Wary of mainstream media, struggling black papers still vital for equal rights

Black papers are needed to combat racism, but readership continues dropping

By Malene Jensen
Agence France Presse

THE CUSTOMERS at William Murray's newsstand in Harlem emphatically argue that there is as much of a need for black newspapers in today's United States as ever before.

Mainstream papers reflect "a Caucasian perspective," Mohammed Ali, 42, said while fishing for The New York Amsterdam News, the city's oldest and best known African-American paper.

"We don't get broad, truthful news about our community" from general market publications, agreed a 70-year-old Harlem resident who declined to give his name, while picking up The Daily Challenge, another black paper.

"The system is designed to reflect the views of those who rule the country," he said, adding that the black community gets a "negative slant" in the mainstream press.

Radical views to some, these sentiments echo throughout the black community.

Blacks are mostly covered in the mainstream press if they have "killed or raped or been arrested for drugs," said Elinor Tatum, 27, who recently took over as editor-in-chief and publisher of The Amsterdam News from her father, Wilbert Tatum.

Mainstream media do not cover the "hundreds of stories out there that are really positive," she said.

Black newspapers are needed "as long as there is racism, and unfortunately I don't see racism disappearing," Tatum said, sitting in a book-cluttered office at the newspaper's worn Harlem home, around the corner from the Apollo theatre.

But despite widespread feelings that black papers are needed "now more than ever," readership has slipped.

The New York area has a black population of more than two million, but The Amsterdam News circulation has dropped to 25,962, according to the most recent figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation, down from 30,200 in 1993 and 58,905 in 1977.

Some blame the paper itself, while others cite advertiser disinterest in minority press for the lack of new, dynamic and lasting papers.

"We need a black press. But a viable black press that can stand up to what is going on out there," said Peter Noel, who reported on race, crime and black

'Blacks are mostly covered in the mainstream press if they have killed or raped or been arrested for drugs'

activist politics for The Amsterdam News in the late 1970s and much of the 1980s and now writes for the investigative weekly The Village Voice.

"Mainstream media never reflected the pain, rage and concerns that black people" have, he said, though faulting The Amsterdam News and other black papers for losing their edge and "not picking up the slack."

The Amsterdam News has just one staff reporter. The rest of its content for its weekly issue comes from some 30 freelancers, reprints from other papers and press releases.

"It's even more important now to have some kind of countervailing pressure," agreed David Greaves, publisher of the black monthly Our Time Press, citing a trend of centralised ownership of general market.

"We give a different view of the world," he said, adding that the main problem "is getting advertiser support."

Many black papers say they are having trouble landing big accounts, partly blaming the phenomenon calling it a calculated effort by big businesses to keep alternative views out of the media.

"The media is a very powerful tool," said Franklin Solis, publisher of a black monthly The New York World. "They figure that if they can keep you away and keep you out of the mainstream, they can control more of the way people think."

Though some dismiss the criticism as conspiracy thinking and stress that mainstream media does not give detailed coverage to white communities either, an internal memo from a major advertising sales firm, recently obtained by local press, caused a bit of a stir.

The memo reportedly warned companies against placing ads on black and ethnic radio shows saying: "You want prospects, not suspects," and adding that advertisers can reach "all the ethnics (they) need without even using an ethnic station."

Ironically, however, black radio mixed with a spur of black oriented web pages have also been faulted for the fall in readership of black papers.

"The main mode of communication among blacks (today) is black radio," said Roscoe Brown, a professor at the City University Graduate Centre.

"It's easily available, and you don't have to wait one week to see what is going on," he said.

Economy

EU says end to trade dispute with Israel far off

TEL AVIV (R) — European Union (EU) officials said Tuesday they had made headway in talks with Israel on outstanding trade disputes but they expected it would take a "long time" to reach a final agreement.

The disputes derive mainly from Israel's conflicts with the Palestinians and involve such thorny issues as how to classify Palestinian products and goods from Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

An EU official, who declined to be identified, said that in a positive development, Israel for the first time had recognised an EU trade accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

"The meeting between Israeli and EU officials in Brussels last week was useful and positive, especially because the Israeli side recognised the existence of the EU-PLO economic agreement," the official said.

"Israel has recognised the need to find a way to make the three trade agreements work together in a way that won't contradict any of the accords," the official said.

The official was referring to the Israel-EU Free Trade Area accord, the Paris agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and the

PLO-EU trade accord. The EU is Israel's biggest trade partner.

But the official added: "It looks like it could take a long time to reach a final agreement."

An Israeli official had said on Sunday progress was made in the talks in Brussels and it appeared "like the matter may be settled soon to the satisfaction of both Israel and the European Union."

The EU and Israel are at loggerheads over how the West Bank and the Gaza Strip fit into their bilateral accord.

The EU says goods produced in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza are not covered under the free trade area. It also says Israel unfairly labels Palestinian products "made in Israel" and erects obstacles in trade between the EU and the Palestinians.

Israeli and EU officials said discussions on the issue would continue in coming weeks but that the venue was still unclear.

"The Israeli side put some proposals on the table and they are being considered," the EU official said.

One solution to the labelling problem, officials from the sides have indicated, could be a "cumulation of origin" agreement, under

which jointly produced Israeli-Palestinian products could be exported duty-free to the EU.

"The question of cumulation of origin was discussed in length from the European Commission's point of view. It is in favour of cumulation of origin in principle provided preconditions are met. Of course that would include a joint request by Israel and the Palestinians," the official said.

In an unrelated development the EU is sponsoring upwards of 200 industrialists who are attending an international Israeli Telecom conference in Tel Aviv.

Silvano Gregoli, the EU's first counsellor of scientific affairs in Israel, said the European body hoped the event would produce joint ventures.

"This event was organised not only for them (industrialists) to meet but to give them the occasion to do more than meet. We would like that they already set up the first preliminary steps for concrete further joint collaborations," Gregoli told Reuters.

Israel is the only non-European state to be a "fully associated" member to the EU's Fourth Framework Research and Development programme.

U.S. sees protectionism danger in financial crisis

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (R) — U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley on Friday told American and European business executives that Asia's financial crisis could spur protectionist pressures if countries fail to open markets and help deflate the ballooning U.S. trade deficit.

"Unless we act, and act decisively, I fear 1998's global financial crisis could turn into 1999's global trade crisis," Daley told European and American business executives.

In a strongly worded speech to the group, Daley warned of a possible public backlash over the rapidly rising U.S. trade deficit, projected to hit \$300 billion next year after a record of about \$240 billion expected this year.

"Just look at Japan's trade surplus with nations outside Asia," Daley said. "It is almost three-and-a-half times as large as it was a year ago. This is a major source of instability. And such instability — caused by boatloads of cheap imports — can lead to political unrest, as people fear for their jobs."

Already President Bill Clinton's administration is feeling political heat from the steel industry which is laying off workers in the face of a flood of cheap imports from Japan, Russia, Brazil and South Korea. The indus-

try, joined by the United Steelworkers of America Union, has launched an anti-dumping complaint against imports from three of those countries and is contemplating other cases as well.

Clinton on Thursday met with steel executives and union leaders to discuss the import surge. Daley said imports of hot-rolled steel, used for construction products, from Japan have surged 500 per cent this year.

"We cannot sustain these rates," Daley said. "We alone cannot absorb all of Asia's imports. We will not be the dumping ground for troubled economies."

He said Washington would "be very aggressive on compliance" and said Europe needed to do more to open its doors to imports and help restore growth.

European Trade Commissioner Leon Brittan said at a news conference that Europe was committed to keeping its markets open and said its own steel imports had increased significantly as well, particularly from Asia.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said the United States wants Europe to liberalise import quotas on steel from Russia. She said the United States takes about ten times the amount of steel from Japan and twice the amount of steel from Russia as the European Union.

Sri Lanka bows to maid-power, restores duty-free rights

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka Monday bowed to intense pressure from hundreds of thousands of angry housemaids and restored their duty-free entitlements which were withdrawn in the latest budget.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's office in a statement said she decided to roll back the proposal made in her Thursday budget for 1999 to withdraw duty free concessions given to Sri Lankan expatriate

workers.

Kumaratunga's budget for 1999 took away the right of 1.2 million Sri Lankans returning home after one year's foreign employment to import or buy duty free merchandise to the value of \$1,200.

"We did not calculate the kind of political fallout from this proposal," said a senior minister who did not want to be named. "There were lots of views expressed against this proposal by ministers

themselves."

Expatriate workers, whose remittances have become Sri Lanka's main source of foreign exchange, had expressed shock and anger that they were being deprived of their duty free concessions.

Other Sri Lankans also were to be affected. Any Sri Lankan travelling abroad is entitled to bring in duty free goods ranging over a scale depending on their length of stay outside the country.

Officials said hundreds of fax messages poured in at the labour ministry as well as other ministries demanding the restoration of duty free allowances.

Sri Lankans employed abroad send home a total of about \$2 billion daily.

Deputy Finance Minister G. L. Peiris told parliament on Thursday the duty free allowance given to migrant workers was usually traded and so the government decided to stop the conces-

sion.

The government's argument was attacked by the local press, which noted duty free car import permits given to members of parliament and senior public servants had also been hawked in the black-market.

The 1.2 million Sri Lankans employed abroad — about 700,000 of them in the Middle East — will now be entitled to buy duty free appliances up to \$1,200, officials said.

Exchange Rates Tuesday, 10-11-98 ACCESS 4646868

CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1887	0.1927	1.8779	1.8390	0.1844	2.3364	0.2067	0.1700
SAUDI RIYAL	5.2584	1.0000	1.0210	9.9489	9.7436	1.0302	12.3793	1.0854	3.7910
U.A.E. DIRHAM	5.2584	0.9794	1.0000	9.7448	9.5429	1.0090	12.1242	1.0728	3.6740
BAHRAIN DINAR	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0000	0.9793	0.1035	1.2442	0.1101	0.3770
QATAR RIYAL	0.5438	0.1026	0.1048	1.0212	1.0000	0.1057	1.2705	0.1124	0.3850
QATAR RIYAL	5.4229	0.9707	0.9911	9.6578	9.4577	1.0000	12.0180	1.0832	3.6412
KUWAIT DINAR	0.4280	0.0808	0.0825	0.8038	0.7871	0.0832	1.0000	0.0885	0.3030
EGYPT POUND	4.8370	0.9129	0.9321	9.0533	8.8561	0.9245	11.3012	1.0000	3.3248
LEBANON LIRA	21.4831	0.4048	0.4139	40.3427	39.5085	4.1772	50.3805	4.4774	15.7000
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2686	0.2722	2.6524	2.5974	0.2748	3.3000	0.2824	1.0000
BRITISH STERLING	0.8513	0.1607	0.1640	1.5886	1.5655	0.1655	1.8889	0.1780	0.6222
GERMAN MARK	2.3864	0.4504	0.4599	4.4815	4.3886	0.4640	5.5757	0.4834	1.6222
SWITZERLAND FRAN	1.9725	0.3723	0.3801	3.7040	3.6273	0.3835	4.6086	0.4078	1.3500
FRANCE FRANC	8.0059	1.5110	1.5426	15.0342	14.7226	1.5567	18.7051	1.6551	5.6662
JAPAN YEN	1.7380	0.3282	0.3361	3.2656	3.1979	0.3381	4.0630	0.3986	1.2312
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.8915	0.5080	0.5187	5.0544	4.9495	0.5172	6.2305	0.5564	1.9000
SWEDEN KRONA	11.2588	2.1248	2.1658	21.1426	20.7044	2.1892	26.3050	2.3275	7.9712
ITALY LIRA	23.0116	4.4553	4.5501	44.3398	43.4308	4.5911	55.1652	4.8814	16.1710
BELGIUM FRANC	40.2444	9.2941	9.4897	92.4762	90.5584	9.5751	115.0546	10.1808	34.8886
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2527	0.4252	0.4341	4.2303	4.1426	0.4380	5.2632	0.4657	1.5846
GREEK DRACHMA	4.0225	0.7582	0.7751	7.5537	7.3871	0.7821	9.3981	0.8318	2.8471
CYPRUS POUND	2.8782	0.5432	0.5547	5.4050	5.2890	0.5597	6.7247	0.5950	2.0378
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	16.8008	3.1709	3.2376	31.5501	30.8881	3.2688	39.2535	3.4734	11.8892
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1737	0.4103	0.4188	4.0820	3.9884	0.4227	5.0787	0.4484	1.5090
EURO	1.2134	0.2290	0.2338	2.2787	2.2314	0.2359	2.8581	0.2909	0.9501

CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.5992	0.5919	0.7181	0.1764	0.8122	0.5248	0.9819	1.1640
BRITISH STERLING	0.6027	0.0000	0.3567	0.4316	0.1063	0.4885	0.3163	0.8053	0.7015
GERMAN MARK	1.6696	2.8034	1.0000	1.2089	0.2981	1.3723	0.8896	1.0171	1.9697
SWITZERLAND FRAN	1.3695	2.3171	0.8285	1.0000	0.2484	1.1343	0.7328	0.8338	1.0259
FRANCE FRANC	5.6682	9.4047	3.3548	4.0589	1.0000	4.6038	2.9745	33.9088	6.5978
JAPAN YEN	123.1200	204.2807	72.8652	88.1853	21.7212	1.0000	64.8086	736.4951	143.9111
HOLLAND GUILDER	1.9056	3.1618	1.1778	1.2646	0.3382	1.5478	1.0000	11.3892	2.7491
SWEDEN KRONA	7.9712	13.2258	4.7178	5.7080	1.4083	6.4743	4.1830	47.8832	9.2729
ITALY LIRA	16.7170	27.7368	9.8841	11.9708	2.9483	13.5778	8.7726	100.0000	19.3649
BELGIUM FRANC	34.8650	57.8480	20.8251	24.8680	6.1510	28.3179	18.2861	208.5801	40.8029
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.5848	2.6463	0.9438	1.1421	0.2814	1.2554	0.8370	9.5408	1.8585
GREEK DRACHMA	2.8478	4.7252	1.6855	2.0383	0.5024	2.3131	1.4945	17.0380	3.3720
CYPRUS POUND	2.0378	3.3811	1.2501	1.4582	0.3585	1.8551	1.0884	12.1800	2.3792
AUSTRIA SCHILLING	11.8860	19.7382	7.0401	8.5177	2.1988	9.6913	6.2421	71.1551	13.9459
CANADA DOLLAR	1.5380	2.5535	0.9108	1.1020	0.2715	1.2500	0.8078	9.2062	1.7944
EURO	0.8991	1.4254	0.5085	0.6152	0.1516	0.6878	0.4508	5.1391	1.0000

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR									
CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
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EURO	0.8991	1.4254	0.5085	0.6152	0.1516	0.6878	0.4508	5.1391	1.0000

WORLD STOCK MARKETS									
STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST	CHANGE	PRECIOUS METALS				
FRANKFURT	DAX	4768.58	4836.22	-67.64	METAL	ASK	BID		
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	9851.93	10139.75	-287.82	GOLD	292.00	292.50		
LONDON	FT-SE 100	5433.80	5491.00	-57.10	SILVER	5.01	5.04		
NEW YORK	DJ IND.	8887.96	8875.48	-12.50	PLATINUM	336.50	338.50		
NEW YORK	NYSE COMPOSITE	589.14	592.10	-2.96					
NEW YORK	AMEX COMPOSITE	688.11	670.80	-17.31					
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1130.20	1141.00	-10.80					
TOKYO	NIKKEI-225	14108.09	14194.54	-86.45					
PARIS	CAC 40	3585.32	3588.63	-3.31					
FRANKFURT	COMMERZBANK	4440.00	4511.30	-71.30					

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Summers sees 'containment' in Asian crisis

WASHINGTON (AFP) — There are now signs that the financial crisis in Southeast Asia has been contained, as currencies stabilise and interest rates fall, Deputy U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said here Monday.

Addressing a meeting of chemical manufacturers, Summers also hailed recent economic measures taken by

Brazil and said he detected "a wind of change" in Europe.

While certain struggling economies of Asia were experiencing "severe economic and social distress," Summers said, "in those nations that were first hit and where policy has been most determined, there has been evidence of containment."

The Philippines, South

Korea and Thailand are returning to stability, according to Summers, who noted that in the latter two nations, currencies had firmed and nominal interest rates were now in the low teen range.

He described Indonesia's problems this year as "more political than economic," highlighting the importance of democracy to economic health.

In Brazil, widely feared to be under threat from the global financial malaise, the government is now committed to a fiscal adjustment programme that could "provide a foundation for future growth and stability."

As a result, Summers said, the United States has made clear its readiness to join international efforts to strengthen Brazil's resis-

tance to economic contagion. The International Monetary Fund has lately been in close contact with Brazilian authorities on final details in an international assistance package that could total more than \$35 billion.

Summers also pointed to structural reforms under way in Europe, notably those aimed at making the labour market more flexible, which

he said were critical if Europe is to contribute to global growth and stability.

"From the factory floor to the highest levels of officialdom — particularly in France and Germany — I have detected a wind of change running through Europe not unlike that which blew through American business in the late 1980s," he said.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

THSPuzzle@aol.com

ACROSS

- 1 of the ball
- 5 Fifty percent
- 10 Spouse
- 14 Foreign
- 15 Borodin opera, "Prince"
- 16 Kuwaili ruler
- 17 Fragrant shrub
- 18 Fork spike
- 19 Ski tow
- 20 Clark Kent's city
- 22 Sub sandwich
- 23 Clair or Coty
- 24 Type of network
- 26 Prehistoric headgear
- 30 Miller play, "All My ..."
- 31 vera
- 32 Ticked
- 35 Sets of cards
- 39 Itemized accounts
- 41 Hole in one
- 42 Viewpoint
- 43 Machine-shop machine
- 44 Stretched
- 46 Vicinity
- 47 Tobacco kiln
- 49 Writer Montagu
- 51 Harry Chapin hit song, "Cats in the Hat"
- 54 Put to sea
- 56 Cosmonaut Gagarin
- 57 Plucky
- 63 Swamp
- 64 snapper, for short
- 64 Religious statue
- 65 Fudd of cartoons
- 66 Himalayan monk
- 67 Turner of tunes
- 68 Kemo Sabe's friend
- 69 Israel's airline
- 70 French summers
- 71 Cheese choice

DOWN

- 1 Aromatic unguent
- 2 Nobelist Wiesel
- 3 Rhythmic cadence
- 4 Gonen's father
- 5 Additional performance
- 6 Attempt a pickup
- 7 Nimble
- 8 Anderson of "WKRP"
- 9 California city
- 10 Oldest man in the Bible
- 11 Brownish yellow
- 12 Small crown
- 13 Actor Flynn
- 21 Sampras
- 25 Finishes
- 26 Corridor
- 27 Director Kazan
- 28 Misplaced
- 29 Systematic
- 30 Large number
- 33 Expansive
- 34 Chill
- 36 Post Sandburg
- 37 Low-blow weapon
- 38 Sojourn
- 40 Tight closure
- 45 Brad or spike
- 48 Descendant of
- 50 Falls as ice
- 51 Full course
- 52 Rustic
- 53 Cooking smell
- 54 Scree element
- 55 Mythical strongman
- 58 Reuse for print
- 59 Apply brakes
- 60 Dodge model of the 80s
- 61 N.L. team
- 62 God of love

Peanuts

GOOD MORNING...WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SUBSCRIBING TO OUR "GREAT PUAPKIN" NEWSLETTER?

DOES IT HAVE CARTOONS IN IT?

YOU SHOULD GET SOMEONE TO DRAW CARTOONS IN IT.

WHAT'S THE NAME OF THE GUY WHO DRAWS "DILBERT"?

Andy Capp

WHO'S THIS BLOKE WHO WRITES THE LOCAL FOOTBALL MATCH REPORTS?

NEVER MIND THAT. DOES HE SAY ABOUT MY GAMES?

NOT A WORD. IS HE A WASTE OF YOURS?

LOOK, IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO GO TO BINGO, DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME!

Mutt'n'Jeff

MY BROTHER KEEN TO BE A "CHICKEN-EGG"?

WHEN HE WATCHED AND "OH HE THINKS HE'S A DOCKSTER!"

GOOD MORNING DOCTOR!

GOOD MORNING! AND WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

OH NOTHING! I CAME TO SEE ABOUT MY BROTHER!

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jordanians should look at the present economy in light of the situation in 1989

"AFTER TWO years of slow economic growth, everybody has the right to question the extent of success that the economic adjustment and restructuring programme has achieved," Youssef Mansur, a senior official at the Ministry of Planning said this week.

But this question should take into consideration the difficult conditions which Jordan passed through in 1989 when the citizen's real income shrank.

He indicated that the economic growth reached 13.5 per cent, the deficit in the current account of the balance of payment was 19 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and the external debt, at 190 per cent of the GDP, required an average of 45 per cent in debt service. The average rate of employment was officially given as 25 per cent at that time.

"Consumption was larger than the size of the economy," Mansur said explaining, "This means that Jordan was financing consumption not only from savings but from borrowing from international organisations."

As such, Mansur said, "if we compare the present situation with that in 1989, we find the current period much better." He added: "If the evaluation of the programme is to be based on the results, the answer should be in favour of the programme."

Mansur, the head of the technical and aid coordination units at the Ministry of Planning, described the four parts of the economic adjustment programme as suitable to eliminate the distortions in the Jordanian economy and upgrade

its efficiency in addition to improving its competitiveness.

The four parts are the improvement in the legislative environment and preparing it to attract investments and development projects, minimising bureaucratic hurdles through improving transparency and facilitating the investment procedures, liberalisation of trade, globalisation and privatisation as well as opening the door for competition.

The planning official indicated that what has not yet been achieved of this programme is not easy as the new economic legislations have not been activated. Moreover, the privatisation programme has not been implemented to open the door for direct investments which are considered the fuel that runs the economic engine.

"Even if the adjustment programme is fully carried out it will not improve growth in the short-term because all the aspects influence the income of the people and the return on capital indirectly and need a long time for its positive effects to reach the people," Mansur pointed out. He stressed that it is premature to evaluate the results of the adjustment programme because in reality it is implemented in all its aspects yet. "It will not be completed until the implementation of the privatisation is carried out fully."

Mansur concluded by emphasising that the Kingdom needs a new reform programme that focuses on the micro-economy and not the macroeconomy (AI Dustour).

Markets need to embrace true credit culture — Standard and Poor's

MELBOURNE (AFP) — A true credit culture that accepts sovereign defaults, bank failures and corporate bankruptcies as a part of the financial marketplace needs to emerge, the president of international ratings agency Standard and Poor's said Monday.

"Such a credit culture must be based on much more transparent financial systems," said Leo O'Neill, also chief rating officer.

He said the uncertain global environment had forced institutions to seek new risk frameworks and lending practices which applied on a worldwide level.

"Markets, economies, investors are becoming interconnected and interdependent," he told a luncheon here.

O'Neill said he had seen many tumultuous times and the present was clearly one of them.

"In each of these crises there was a clear period of market turmoil charac-

terised as a flight to quality," he said.

"And as we are currently mid-air in such a flight, it is important to recognise that as painful as they are, they are necessary periods of recalibrating the credit markets' risk-reward ratio," he added.

At the heart of the pain in markets around the world was the search for a new framework to pricing risk on a global basis.

He said the frontline players in the present crisis were not the development banks or the syndicated lenders, rather asset managers of high-yield bond and equity funds struggling to accommodate a wholesale shift in investment sentiment among a wide range of individual investors.

The experience was teaching the world that the shift to a truly global market was rockier than many expected.

"That appears to be the nature of the shift and if you based your perceptions of progress on a snapshot

impression it might seem that things are getting worse, not better," he said.

"This is the wrong impression. All of us in the financial community need to remain engaged in this process toward more open markets characterised by transparency and the free flow of information," he added.

O'Neill said perhaps the most challenging in the current deliberations was the search for a financial architecture which would bolster systemic confidence while allowing individual defaults and losses.

He was glowing in his praise of the "soundness and efficiency of the Australian banking system."

It has given comfort to investors amid the depreciation and volatility in the Australian dollar during 1998, he said, adding that Australia's sound market fundamentals had made the country a standout in the Asian region over the last 12 months.

Hong Kong tourism industry explores Middle Eastern markets

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong's tourism authority said Monday it planned to woo visitors from the Middle East, after seeing a sharp decline in arrivals from crisis-stricken Asia.

The Hong Kong Tourist Association (HKTA) said in a statement that a 14-

member delegation left for a one-week trip to Turkey and Israel on Saturday.

The delegation, including representatives from 10 Hong Kong travel agents, two hotels and one airline, took part in a workshop and a promotional campaign entitled "We are Hong Kong - City of Life" for Turkish and Israeli buyers and the local media.

The workshops have been designed to encourage participants to discuss business opportunities and to give the Hong Kong delegation an opportunity to update

their counterparts on the latest developments in the Hong Kong tourism industry, the HKTA said.

The number of visitors from Israel rose 5.9 per cent to 17,696 arrivals in 1997, compared to the previous year. Visitors from Turkey increased 7.9 per cent to number of 8,061.

Hong Kong's tourism industry has been hit hard by the Asian financial crisis with receipts dropping 28.8 per cent in the first nine months of the year to 39.4 billion Hong Kong dollars (\$5.09 billion).

Saudi Arabia launches new airline service

JEDDAH (AFP) — The first airline aimed at Saudi Arabia's business community has been launched with a capital of \$320 million.

The National Company for Aviation Services (NCAS) will focus on private business flights, the director of the national carrier, Saudi Airlines, Khaled Ben Abdullah Ben Bakr said at a press conference.

He added that the new company had contracts with U.S. firms Gulfstream and Executive-Jet to launch the new Middle East Fractional Ownership Programme (MEFOP).

He said NCAS has ordered 12 Gulfstream-IV business jets, the first of which is due for delivery in April 1999. The jets are

capable of carrying eight people and flying 12,000 kilometres non-stop.

Last year at the Dubai airshow, Gulfstream's President Bill Boisture said his company had signed a contract for 12 jets with Middle East investors at a cost of \$400 million over the next six years.

It is the first such programme in the region and aims at encouraging business people to invest in, buy and use private jets.

Worldwide, there are about 140 private jets operating under such schemes.

Bakr said the new company would not be in competition with the national carrier because it would only provide private flights.

UNCTAD: Power of multinationals grows

GENEVA (AFP) — The might of the multinational is steadily expanding, according to the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD's) 1998 world investment report issued Tuesday.

At the end of last year, the stock of foreign direct investment (FDI) owned by some 53,000 large and small trans-national companies (TNCs) and their nearly half a million foreign affiliates amounted to \$3.5 trillion, a 10 per cent jump over 1996, UNCTAD said.

Sales of this far-flung group were worth \$9.5 trillion, their global exports \$2 trillion and worldwide assets \$13 trillion in 1996, the report said.

The foreign arms of TNCs, or multinationals, currently produce one third of world exports and account for seven per cent of global gross domestic product, compared to five per cent in the mid 1980s.

according to UNCTAD.

Companies from the United States, Britain, Japan, France and Germany accounted for three quarters of the biggest 100 multinationals in 1996, just as they did at the start of the decade.

Only two firms from developing nations — South Korea's Daewoo Corporation and Petroleos de Venezuela — crop up in the list of the 100 largest TNCs.

Rich countries as a whole account for more than two-thirds of the foreign investment in their own backyards and are behind 90 per cent of investment made in poorer countries.

But developing countries are making inroads.

The total foreign assets of the top 50 TNCs based in the developing world have been rising much more rapidly than those of the world's top 100, growing in 1996 alone by 31 per cent to \$104 billion.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19)

The work is intense today, and complicated. Minimise distractions so you don't make mistakes. It's Veteran's Day, one of your most emotional holidays. You'll want to pay your respects, of course, and do it in a way that shows the depth of your appreciation. Don't let this one slip by. It's important to you as well as to them.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're smart, especially when it comes to people you love, and saving money. Both will be on your mind today, as you shop for an important item. You and one dear to your heart need to discuss this matter carefully, then go ahead and act. You don't want to postpone it forever. What's the fun in that?

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) There's confusion at your house today. The situation is scrambled, but that's OK. While things are in a state of flux, you can put in corrections you've thought about in quite a while. You don't have to make the decision quite yet. Go ahead and rearrange until you have things just the way you want them.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You'll find it easy to learn today, and your attention to detail will be awesome. You have an excellent memory, but right now you're going to surprise even yourself. If you have a difficult job to do, go ahead and study it now. You'll be amazed at how much easier it becomes once you have the instructions down by heart.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You'll have the opportunity to make money today. It'll require service on your part again. That's not easy for a Leo, but if you can master this trick, you could wind up quite wealthy. You won't care about having the wealth for yourself, either. You'll want to use it to benefit others. It couldn't happen to a nice person.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're coming into your own a little more today. The moon's in your sign, as is Mars. That means you're strong, aggressive and careful. You want everything to be perfect, and for the next few days you can make that happen. Go ahead and be outrageous about it, as you

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

request perfection from others, too.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're up against the deadline. There's a lot you wanted to have done by now, and it hasn't all been handled

yet. If you focus on the details, you'll do fine, but you have to keep the overview in mind, too. Don't get bogged down in the little stuff.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Get together with friends this morning and figure out what your next project is going to be. You've noticed areas in your neighbourhood that need tidying up, and now is the time to take action. Don't wait for somebody else to do it. Just handle it yourself. You're probably the perfect person for the job.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Something you've been trying to learn will finally start to make sense. Keep after it, even if it seems impossible. Learning is not a passive task. It requires your participation. You have to keep asking the tough questions, even if you keep getting negative answers. Keep that in mind as you ask again for something you didn't get before.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You've been studious long enough. Now it's time to have fun. Pry yourself free from your routine and try something new. Take a different route to work or venture a little further on your lunch hour. There are all sorts of interesting things out there. Today, plan on finding at least three of them. This is only the beginning.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Money is the problem right now — how to get it, how to spend it, all that stuff. There are regulations to be followed and probably paperwork to fill out. Once you know what you're after, the rest is going to be easy, so make that your first priority.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Put the finishing touches to the job you've been doing all week. It doesn't quite look like you wanted it to, but that's OK. You can change your ideas to fit reality, and you can also change reality to fit your ideas. By doing both, you can reach a compromise you can live with. That's your assignment.

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Soccer greats help kick off new FIFA initiative

ZURICH (AP) — Soccer legends Pele, Bobby Charlton, Franz Beckenbauer and Michel Platini met Monday with FIFA President Sepp Blatter for discussions on a new panel to address "fundamental issues facing the game."

The four will be members of the FIFA Football Committee, which will be chaired by Spanish soccer federation president Angel Maria Villar.

It should be formally set up in December and will also include current players, referees, coaches, managers and doctors, the world governing body said in a statement.

The new committee should meet four or five times a year. It will not discuss the laws of soccer but will concentrate on "the future welfare of the game in more general terms," Blatter said.

The visit followed a personal initiative by the Brazilian Pele, who had requested a meeting with Blatter to discuss future cooperation, FIFA said.

"It is essential that football remains in the hands of football people to ensure the game's long-term viability," Platini said.

Faced with the threat of a breakaway independent Super League, European

governing body UEFA has moved to revamp its club competitions.

BSkyB's planned takeover of English club Manchester United, which has been referred to Britain's Monopolies and Mergers Commission, has sparked speculation about the possibility of a series of takeovers of soccer teams by media companies.

"It's vital that the professional sector of football uses its resources and expertise to help the smaller federations," Germany's Beckenbauer said.

"The good image of the game itself is the responsibility of all of us."

Del Piero out for at least 5 months

TURIN (AFP) — Juventus' hopes of retaining their league title suffered a hammer blow on Monday when star striker Alessandro Del Piero was ruled out for at least five months with a left knee injury.

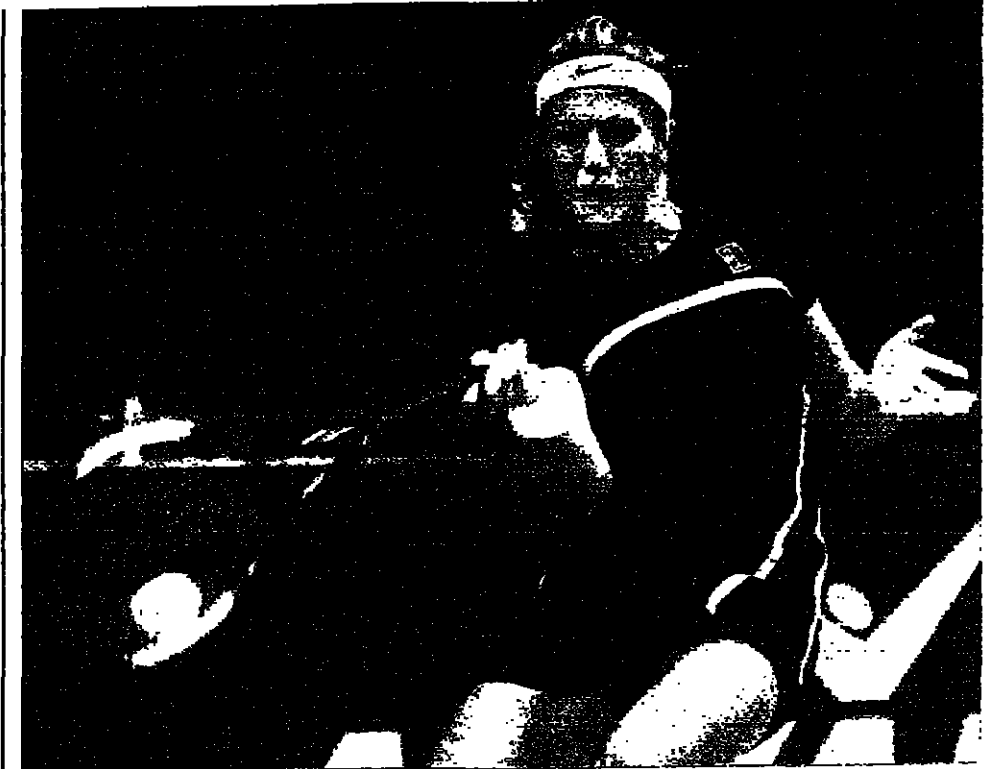
Del Piero, who suffered the injury at the end of Sunday's 2-2 draw with Udinese, did not say whether he would need an operation.

The news came on Del Piero's 24th birthday, just as he had rediscovered the scoring touch which won the Italian championship for Juventus last season and took the club to the European Cup final.

A poor run of form at the World Cup continued into the early part of this season, and he was dogged by insinuations of doping by AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman, until a rash of goals at club and international level looked to have redeemed the talented striker.

But his season could already be over, spelling big trouble not just for Juventus but also for Italy as they try to qualify for the European championships in 2000.

Del Piero scored both goals in Italy's 2-0 win over Switzerland last month at Udine, in the very stadium where he suffered Sunday's injury. He will now miss Italy's next two games in March against Denmark and Belorussia.



Amanda Coetzer of South Africa returns a shot to Sandra Cacic during the first round of the Advanta championships in Villanova, Pa. Coetzer won 6-2, 6-0 (AP photo)

Schnyder, Coetzer advance at Advanta Championships

VILLANOVA, Pennsylvania (AP) — Seventh-seeded Patty Schnyder beat Silvia Farina 7-6, 4-6, 6-4 in the first round of the Advanta Championships.

Also advancing to the second round Monday were Lisa Raymond, Amanda

Coetzer, Natasha Zvereva and Kimberly Po. Raymond defeated Els Callens 6-3, 6-3. Coetzer defeated Sandra Cacic 6-2, 6-0. Zvereva defeated Tara Snyder 6-2, 6-1, and Po beat Corina Morariu 6-1, 6-3.

Lindsay Davenport, the world's top-ranked player,

will play her first match on Tuesday.

The \$450,000 Advanta tournament is the final event on the Corel WTA Tour before the Chase Championships in New York the following week-end.

Ivanisevic struggles at Kremlin Cup

MOSCOW (AP) — Third-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia saved eighteen aces but had to struggle through two tiebreaks to defeat Carsten Arians of Germany on Tuesday in the \$1.1 million Kremlin Cup.

The 1996 champion from Croatia never earned a single break of serve and needed an hour and twenty minutes to prevail 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-3).

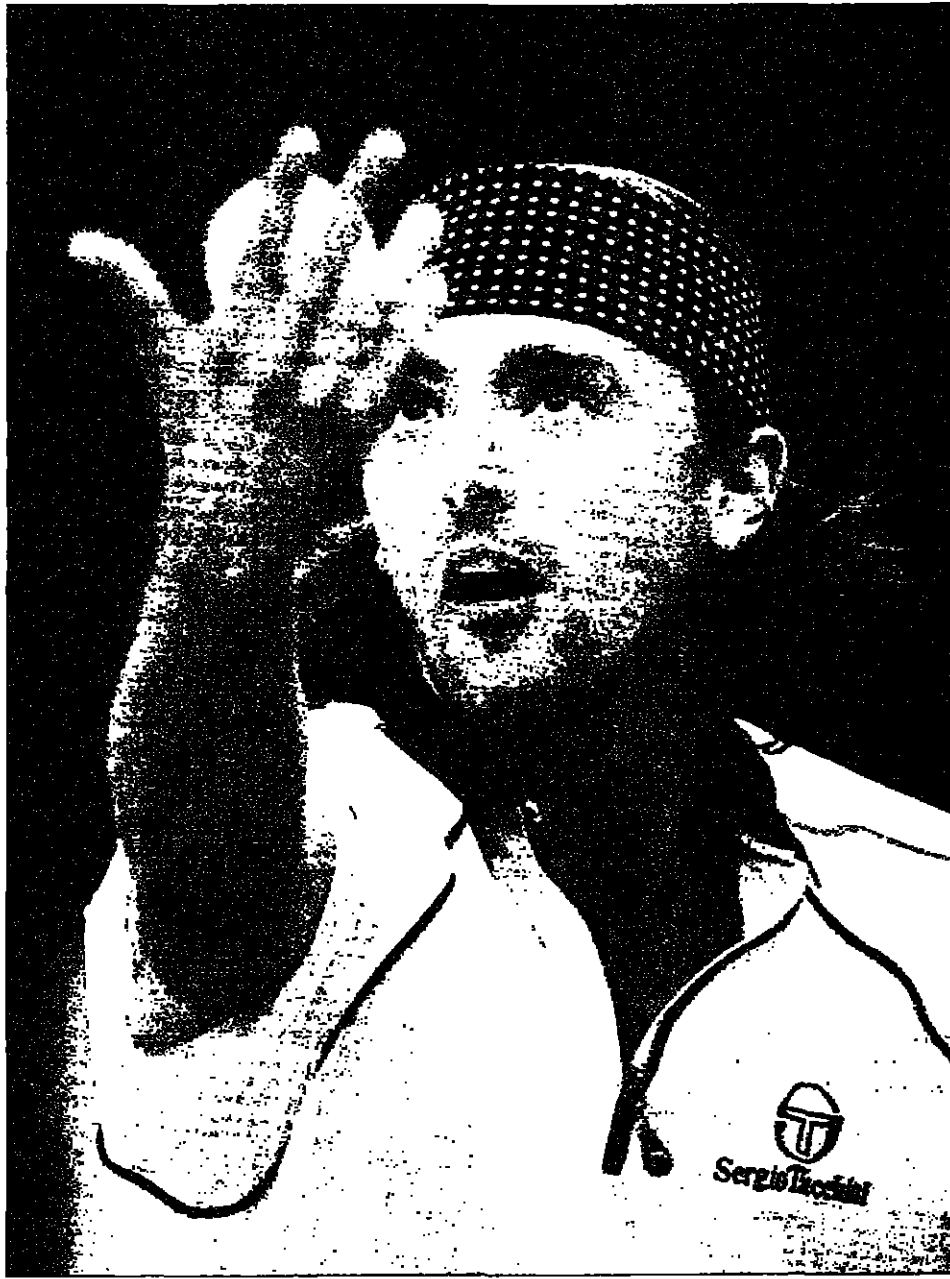
"If a qualifier is a good player and ... is serving decently, it's very tough to break. But I was pretty confident at two tiebreakers," Ivanisevic said. "I never thought I could lose the match."

Lars Burgsmuller of Germany recorded the first upset, surprising fifth-seeded Bogdan Ulihrach of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-2.

Another qualifier,

Raemon Sluiter of the Netherlands, eliminated seventh-seeded Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-4.

Jan Krosnak of Slovakia, who replaced year's runner-up Petr Korda, outplayed Oliver Gross of Germany 6-3, 6-1.



Goran Ivanisevic

Steelers overcome Green Bay Packers 27-20

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Kordell Stewart could do no wrong on a night the Green Bay Packers could do virtually nothing right until it was too late.

Stewart, benched last week in one of Pittsburgh's worst losses of the Bill Cowher era, passed and ran the Steelers to a 24-point halftime lead and a 27-20 victory Monday night.

The Packers (6-3) rallied to score the final 20 points, but were outscored 14-39 to fall two games behind Minnesota in the NFC Central.

"How big was this? This was huge," said Pittsburgh's Jerome Bettis, who ran for 100 yards for the seventh straight time on a Monday night. "If we lose, we're two games behind (in the AFC Central). This was what we needed."

Especially for Stewart, who emerged from a season-long slump.

Pumping his fists and leaping with joy like a school kid on a playground with every perfectly thrown pass, Stewart ran for a touchdown, threw an 8-yard TD pass to Charles Johnson and set up a third score with a 45-yard throw to rookie Hines Ward in his best game in nearly a year.

And that was only the first half. "We haven't been coming out throwing, but we felt we had to

do it because their offense is so potent," receiver Courtney Hawkins said. "We had to keep their offense off the field."

Stewart was 15-of-22 for 231 yards and no interceptions in his most dominating performance since throwing for three touchdowns and running for two in a December victory over Denver. Since then, he had eight touchdowns and 17 interceptions in 12 games, forcing Cowher to continually defend his decision to keep playing him.

"Our players are not robots. We tried to tell them this man was capable of great things," Packers coach Mike Holmgren said. "He has been faltering all season but he is capable of doing much more. It's hard to get them to believe that."

Stewart looked nothing like the hesitant, unconfident quarterback whose poor play was threatening to unravel the Steelers' season and leave them challenging only for a wild card spot.

Instead, the Steelers (6-3) stayed within a game of AFC Central leader Jacksonville (7-2) with two games left against the Jaguars.

"It's a big game, the biggest of the season. We couldn't afford to lose," said cornerback Carnell Lake, who played despite a severely sprained right ankle.

And now the Packers (6-3) are in a precarious situation, just a week after a 36-22 victory over San Francisco pulled them within a game of Minnesota.

"We tried to match their intensity but we couldn't,"

Holmgren said. "But there is no quit in this team, and we battled back at the end. If we had gotten the ball back one more time, who knows what would have happened?"

The Packers' second Monday night meltdown in barely a month — Randall Cunningham passed for 442 yards in Minnesota's 37-24 romp on Oct. 5 — came just when the Vikings (8-1) finally seemed vulnerable. Both Cunningham and Brad Johnson are hurt and may not play Sunday against Cincinnati.

But the Packers, who displayed a playoff-like intensity against the 49ers, came off flat and overcautious, and they didn't begin playing like two-time defending NFC champions until it was too late.

Reggie White, who manhandled the 49ers' offensive line in the Packers' nine-sack performance last week, had only one sack, and it didn't come until the Steelers led 27-0.

White upended backup quarterback Mike Tomczak on a third-and-goal play from the Packers'

4, allowing Keith McKenzie to run 88 yards for the longest fumble return touchdown in Packers' history.

That defensive play got the Packers' offense going. Favre drove them 74 yards for Raymond Harris' 2-yard TD run and a 2-point conversion pass to Antonio Freeman that made it 27-17 with 4:52 remaining.

The desperate Packers then recovered an onside kick, but stalled at the Steelers' 19 and Ryan Longwell kicked a 37-yard field goal with 2:40 to go.

Green Bay then tried another onside kick, but Steelers tight end Mark Bruener recovered at the Packers' 41, allowing Pittsburgh to run out the clock and Bettis to hit 100 yards on a 34-carry night.

Favre's number's looked good — 22-of-39 for 234 yards and an interception — but most of the yards came in the fourth quarter.

The Steelers had dominated until then, outgaining the Packers 274-72 in the first half while outrushing them 105-16.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

England's World Cup bid launched

LONDON (AFP) — England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals has been officially launched, the Football Association (FA) said Monday. FIFA set a December 31 deadline for countries to notify them that they wish to stage the finals. And England's bid, signed by the FA's chairman Keith Wiseman and chief executive Graham Kelly, arrived at FIFA's offices in Zurich earlier in the day. England are facing competition to stage the world's biggest sporting event from favourites South Africa and Germany while Brazil and Argentina are said to be considering entering the race.

Reich attacks Vogts

COLOGNE (AFP) — Midfielder Marco Reich has criticised Bert Vogts for hampering his progress as a footballer by naming him for Germany's friendly against Malta last month. Reich and teammate Michael Ballack were taken to Malta by Germany's former coach but have since been overlooked for the national squad by Vogts' successor, Erich Ribbeck. The 20-year-old Kaiserlautern player claims he is having difficulty living up to expectations raised by that one-off nomination. "We were never really considered (to play), we were just an alibi for Vogts," Reich complained in the football weekly Kicker. Germany play their next international on November 18th, a friendly against Holland in Gelsenkirchen.

Chelsea sign World Cup Dane

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea have signed Danish international Bjarne Goldbaek from FC Copenhagen, the English Premiership club announced Monday. Goldbaek, a right-sided midfielder who was a member of Denmark's World Cup squad but did not play a game, will face stiff competition for a first-team place from Dennis Wise, Roberto Di Matteo and Gustavo Poyet. The 30-year-old, who played against Chelsea in the Cup Winners' Cup last week, arrived at the west London club for an undisclosed fee. The signing comes three days after his compatriot, winger Brian Laudrup, left Chelsea for FC Copenhagen because he was homesick.

Aynaoui beats Alami in Chevrolet Cup

SANTIAGO (AP) — Argentine qualifier Eduardo Medica upset Brazilian Fernando Meligheni 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 in the opening round of the \$315,000 Chevrolet Cup tennis tournament. In Monday's all-Argentine duel, Lucas Arnold defeated Mariano Hood 6-2, 3-6, 6-2, while Younes El Aynaoui stopped fellow Moroccan Karim Alami 6-3, 6-4. In other matches, Dominik Harvay of Slovakia defeated Andres Sa of Brazil, 7-6 (6-3), 6-4. The Argentine Franco Squilary (8) beat Chile's Nicolas Masu 6-3, 7-5.

Street will have new focus after recovery

NEW YORK (AP) — The scars that run up and down Picabo Street's legs are painful reminders of her frightening crash eight months ago in Switzerland. But the real pain from the accident that shattered her left leg and tore up her right knee rests with the psyche of the top U.S. skier, the 1998 Olympic gold medalist in the super G.

"I have a real strong feeling that I am going to be too afraid to run downhill again," said Street, the lone American to win the World Cup downhill crown.

"And if I am afraid to run downhill, I would be afraid to run Super G," said Street, her crutches nearby during a series of promotional appearances Monday for the New York Ski and Snowboard Ball.

Instead Street, who won the world downhill title in 1995-96 and an Olympic silver medal in the downhill in 1994, will probably turn to the slalom and giant slalom events. Her goal is to compete in 2000 and to be racing in the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City.

"That's America, baby, and I can't imagine passing it up," said the 27-year-old Street, who had full reconstructive surgery on her right knee four weeks ago. In focusing on racing in the slower slalom and giant slalom events, Street will be listening to her own fears of going too fast again.

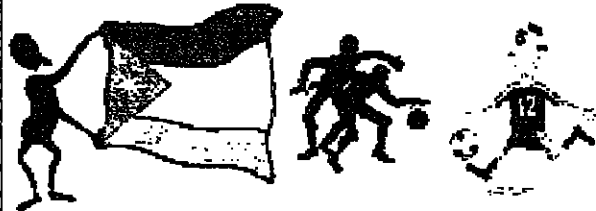
"You play hard, you pay hard," she said. "I'm not so sure that I am ready to play that hard or pay that hard anymore."

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Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

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LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Wihdat to play Faisali on occasion of King's birthday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the country's leading soccer teams, Al Wihdat and Faisali are expected to play a friendly match within the next few days on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday on Nov. 14.

Minister congratulates Prince Rashid

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sataa Hassan Tuesday congratulated His Royal Highness Prince Rashid, president of the Jordan Boxing Federation on the Kingdom's latest results at the 18th Arab championships. Jordan won fifth place in the event held in Tunisia. Jordanian boxers achieved a gold by Muhammad Abu Khadejah and three bronze medals by Muhammad Uqailan, Nasser Masaad and Kamal Ajouri.

Syria to compete in most events at Pan-Arab Games

AMMAN (J.T.) — Syria has announced that it would actively be taking part in the upcoming Pan-Arab Games which will be held here Aug. 15-31 1999. HRH Prince Abdullah, chairman of the higher committee of the Games, received a letter from Samih Mudallal, president of the Syrian Sports Association indicating that Syrian athletes will be taking part in 22 out of 26 men's events and 15 out of 19 women's events. The only events Syria will be missing out are polo, bridge, equestrian and fencing.

Hassanein in World Championships

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan's bodybuilding champion Mustafa Hassanein and trainer Ali Abdul Razaq left the country to participate in the 52nd World Championship in the Turkish city of Izmir after the Jordan Olympic Committee sponsored his participation. Jordan Bodybuilding Federation President Abdul Mun'em Abu Touq also flew to Izmir where he will be elected as International Bodybuilding President's Deputy for the Middle East.

Tennis Federation gets director

AMMAN (J.T.) — Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Sataa Hassan Tuesday approved the appointment of Mohammad Rashid Zoubi as director of the Jordan Tennis Federation starting at the end of the month. Zoubi will be a full-time director until the end of the next summer's Pan-Arab Games which will be held in Amman Aug. 15-31, 1999.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib



Steffi Graf

Graf up to 17th in latest WTA Tour rankings

PARIS (AFP) — Steffi Graf's win in Leipzig on Sunday has lifted her five places to 17th in the new WTA rankings published on Monday.

There was no change in the top ten, with American Lindsay Davenport holding on to the No. 1 spot for the fifth consecutive week.

WTA rankings released on Monday:

1. Lindsay Davenport (USA)	5468 pts
2. Martina Hingis (Svi)	5202
3. Jana Novotna (Cze)	4301
4. Arantxa Sanchez (Spa)	3700
5. Venus Williams (USA)	3263
6. Monica Seles (USA)	3050
7. Mary Pierce (Fra)	2713
8. Conchita Martinez (Spa)	2364
9. Nathalie Tauziat (Fra)	2251
10. Patty Schnyder (Svi)	2155
11. Dominique Van Roost (Bel)	2001
12. Irina Spirlea (Rom)	1979
13. Anna Kournikova (Rus)	1918
14. Sandrine Testud (Fra)	1898
15. Amanda Coetzer (Rsa)	1708
16. Natasha Zvereva (Blr)	1608
17. Steffi Graf (Ger)	1536
18. Anke Huber (Ger)	1462
19. Ai Sugiyama (Jpn)	1396
20. Silvia Farina (Ita)	1336

Thailand slashes ticket sales target for Asian Games

BANGKOK (AFP) — Thailand is hoping for a last-minute rush on tickets for the Asian Games after slashing sales targets on Tuesday amid sluggish demand.

With the games just 26 days away, officials admitted ticket revenues for the opening and closing ceremonies were a mere 60 million baht (\$1.6 million so far, way off a targeted 250 million baht).

"I admitted that sales were far below the target, which worried the committee," Deputy Prime Minister Bhichai Rantakul told reporters as he went in to brief cabinet Tuesday.

"But I think that we can boost sales in the last minutes," added Bhichai, who chairs the Bangkok Asian Games Organising Committee.

Forecast ticket sales for the ceremonies have been revised down to 200 million baht, from 250 million, ticketing committee official Kiatissak Wongpanich told AFP.

Local ticket agent Power Telecom put the projected take from the two ceremonies even lower at only 160 million baht.

Kiatissak said overall sales for the entire games will reach a mere 260 million baht, down from an earlier estimate of 312 million baht.

Officials have shrugged off fears that Asia's financial crisis would overshadow the event. But already, some of the 41 competing nations have been forced to scale down their teams, blaming economic turmoil.

The run-up to the December 6-20 games has also been blighted by fears that new venues would not be completed on time and athletes and officials may become stalled in Bangkok's notorious traffic jams.

Although officials now assure the venues are ready, there are still worries that key roads and expressways leading to the stadiums will not be completed before the games kick off.

Chang signs up for Australian titles

ADELAIDE (R) — Former French Open champion Michael Chang will play in the Australian men's hardcourt championships in January as part of his build-up to the 1999 Australian Open.

Chang, who finished runner-up at the 1996 Australian Open, will warm up for the first Grand Slam tournament of the year by competing at the hardcourt titles in Adelaide from January 4-10.

Sydney organisers in dark over tests for growth hormones

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sydney Olympic organisers Tuesday said they were not aware of any reliable blood test being discovered for human growth hormone (HGH) and erythropoietin (EPO), as claimed by an IOC official in Dublin.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not currently test blood samples and has said it will not do so until 100 percent reliable tests are found.

David Cowan, head of the IOC's laboratory in London, reportedly told an anti-doping conference in Ireland that a \$3 million research project had discovered such a test.

But the Sydney Organising Committee for the 2000 Olympic Games (SOCOG), which has consistently said it is ready to implement blood tests if scientists find the answers, are in the dark.

"Our understanding is that research is still continuing into finding a totally reliable test for these substances but it hasn't been achieved yet," said a spokesman.

Cowan, who supervised the establishment of the \$8 million U.S. drug testing centre in Kuala Lumpur for September's Commonwealth Games, said he hoped the tests would be accepted when the IOC stages an international symposium on drugs in Switzerland in February.

It is due to be attended by several senior Australian figures including SOCOG vice-president John Coates, IOC members Kevan Gosper and Phil Coles and SOCOG doping control manager Nikki Vance.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
2 TANNIAH WISCH
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YOU BE THE JUDGE

Both vulnerable. West deals.

NORTH
♠ K 8 7 4
♥ K 9 3
♦ A K Q 2
♣ J 5

WEST
♠ 10 3
♥ A Q 8
♦ 8 5 4 3
♣ A K 7

EAST
♠ Q J 8 5 2
♥ 7 4
♦ 8 7 6
♣ 8 2

SOUTH
♠ A 9
♥ J 10 8 6 2
♦ J 10
♣ Q 10 6 3

The bidding:

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
1♣ Pass Pass 2♣
Pass Pass Pass 4♣

Opening lead: King of ♠

Study the bidding and play of this deal, then decide who, if anyone, made any error in either phase of the game.

South's jump to two hearts was borderline. Once North showed interest in game, South decided that the fifth heart merited a jump.

...and wasted no time in getting to the heart game.

West started with king, ace and another club, declarer discarding a spade from dummy. Three rounds of diamonds allowed declarer to get rid of the remaining club from hand, and a spade to the ace provided the entry to the closed hand to lead the jack of trumps. West rose with the ace and exited with a spade, taken with the king. Declarer tried to get to hand with a spade ruff to repeat the trump finesse, but West overruled. Down one.

We would have tried three no trump with the South hand rather than four hearts, but would not rule that bidding decision an error. Nor can we fault South for coming to hand with a spade ruff rather than a diamond — we would have done the same in all probability.

South was guilty of a far graver blunder. Instead of crossing to hand with the ace of spades, declarer should first have cashed the king of spades, then led a spade to the ace. Now when West shoots up with the ace of hearts, any return allows declarer to win in hand to repeat the trump finesse and land the contract.

Stockholm Open Pioline given rough ride

STOCKHOLM (Agencies)

Sixth seed Cedric Pioline was given a tough opening match by 17-year-old Swede Andreas Vinciguerra in the \$825,000 Stockholm Open on Tuesday.

Vinciguerra, World No. 3 in the junior rankings, forced the Frenchman to play his best until his inexperience told and he lost 6-3 7-5.

"Vinciguerra played well and I was a little bit surprised. He had nothing too lose and then it is easy to play," said Pioline.

American Todd Martin demolished qualifier Ivo Heuberger of Switzerland 6-1 6-2 in another first round encounter.

Japanese qualifier Takao Suzuki upset eight-seeded Thomas Enqvist 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 to move into the second round Monday night.

Suzuki, who swept past three more experienced players in the qualification round, broke Enqvist, a twofold Stockholm Open winner, for 5-4 in the deciding set and then served home the match.

The win was his second in an ATP tournament, the first coming in Japan Open when he defeated Swedish Davis Cupper Nicklas Kulti, one of his victims in the qualifications.

The 22-year-old from Sapporo, who is coached by Italian Claudio Pistolesi, admitted fast indoor surface is his favorite surface.

"We have got plenty of such indoors in Sapporo," said Suzuki, who is 122nd on the latest ATP-ranking.

"It was certainly my biggest win in my career," said the Japanese, who earlier this year have won three Challenge tournaments.

In the second round Suzuki plays Dane Kenneth Carlsen, who overcame Fredrik Jonsson of Sweden, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5).

Also making it through to



Japanese Takao Suzuki stretches for a forehand against Swedish Thomas Enqvist during the first round of Stockholm Open tournament. Suzuki, who had to qualify for the tournament, defeated eighth-seeded Enqvist by 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 (AP photo)

the second round, one of the world's oldest indoors tournaments, is Swede Magnus Gustafsson who beat Rainer Schuttler of Germany, 3-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Two Swedish players, who are fighting for the singles matches on the Swedish Davis Cup team in the final against Italy early December, saw action. Magnus Gustafsson, a traditional clay court player beat Rainer Schuttler of Germany 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 while the Stockholm Open defending champion Jonas Bjorkman of Sweden outgunned German Marc-Kevin Goellner 6-4, 6-2.

Other winners in singles action were Geoff Grant, a U.S. qualifier, who beat

Michael Kohlmann of Germany 6-3, 6-3 and Wayne Ferreira of South Africa who beat Jens Knippschild of Germany 6-4, 6-2.

Third-seeded Briton Tim Henman, who is close to qualifying for the ATP World Championships in Hanover, whipped Mikael Tillstrom of Sweden 6-3, 6-1 in 54 minutes.

"I am very pleased with my game. My percentage in points won on my serve was pretty high. I was also satisfied with my ground strokes," said Henman who faces Ferreira in the next round.

"It will be a tough match. He will obviously try to keep me away from the net

so I must play aggressively," said the Briton who has lost two out of three encounters with the South African.

The big guns don't see action until Wednesday. American Pete Sampras, trying to end the season as No. 1 for a record sixth consecutive year, as well as Briton Greg Rusedski, who beat Sampras in the Paris Open final Sunday, will have another day off.

Sampras has never won the tournament. He reached the semifinal in 1994, when the tournament, was held in the 14,000-seat Globe Arena. In 1995, the tournament returned across town to its original site, the Royal Tennis Hall.

Rested Hingis ready for stretch run

NEW YORK (R) — At a point in the long tennis season when most players are anxiously looking forward to some time off, Martina Hingis is rested and ready for the stretch run with an eye on recapturing the world number one ranking.

"Everybody gets tired at the end of the year. Now, I've had a month off so I'm ready again," Hingis declared during a stop in New York to promote the season-ending Chase Championships, which begin next week.

A sprained left ankle forced the Swiss teenager to pull out of last month's Zurich tournament. Hingis makes her return to competition this week in Philadelphia, where she will defend the last of the 12 titles she won during her 1997 dream run.

"I'm in better shape," said Hingis, who spent her first week off partaking of her other passion — riding horses. "I couldn't do anything else because of my ankle."

She spent the past two weeks working out at the Bolletieri academy in Bradenton, although her pale complexion reveals little time spent in the Florida sunshine. "I was practicing indoors," she explained. "I've been working on myself. The ankle is good and I'm in good shape now."

Hingis said she was excited about returning to the 16-player season finale at Madison Square Garden with a chance at reclaiming the number one ranking she ceded to U.S. Open champion Lindsay Davenport last



Martina Hingis

month.

"Whoever wins that is going to end up first," she said of her tussle for the top ranking with Davenport. "I've been there and I want to get back there."

This has been a much different sort of year for Hingis, who turned 18 on September 30.

After coming within one victory of a historic sweep of the four Grand Slam tournaments at the age of 16 and winning virtually every time she stepped on court in 1997, Hingis came down to earth in 1998.

Although she has four titles, including the Australian Open, the Swiss phenom has not won a tournament since the Italian Open in early May. "It wasn't as great as last year but still pretty good. I made the final of the U.S. Open," she said.

"I always said it's going to be tough this year for me to come back and defend the titles so (I tried) not to put too much pressure on me."

A refreshed Hingis has a different outlook for the Chase Championships. "If I lose, I lose but I have to feel like I gave everything," she said.

Hingis knows she is not so far ahead of everybody anymore, and she is even behind somebody now.

"Now I'm the hunter again," she said smiling.

"You don't have only three or four players in the world competing on your level, now it's 10 or 15. It's getting tougher."

"Sometimes you get sick of losing, of course," she admitted. "I still made semis, finals at a lot of the tournaments but I didn't end up as the champion, so that kind of bothered me, but I still had some great wins."

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Israel plans multi-million dollar boost to settler defences — radio

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's army has drawn up a multi-million dollar plan to boost defences around Jewish settlements near areas to be turned over to Palestinian control under the Wye River agreement, Israel Radio reported Tuesday.

The plan calls for digging anti-tank ditches around some settlements, building armoured guardposts equipped with heavy machineguns and erecting security walls and electric fences, the radio said.

The initial cost of the security measures was put at around \$11 million and does not include the cost of building bypass roads so settlers can reach their enclaves without passing through Palestinian-run towns and villages, it said.

An army spokesman declined to provide details of the security plan but said senior officers had been meeting with settler leaders this week to discuss "a defence and security programme in accordance with the Wye River agreement."

The agreement, signed by Israeli and Palestinian leaders in Washington on Oct. 23, calls for Israel to transfer another 13 per cent of the West Bank to at least partial Palestinian control over three months beginning on Nov. 16.

Israel will also withdraw fully from another 14 per cent of the West Bank now under shared rule.

The deal will place 17 per cent of the West Bank under exclusive Palestinian control and leave another 23 per cent

of the territory under joint Israeli-Palestinian rule.

The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to release maps of the exact areas to be turned over to the Palestinians but Jewish settler groups said this week that the pullbacks would affect 33 settlements, some of which will become virtual enclaves in Palestinian-controlled areas.

Netanyahu has repeatedly postponed government meetings to approve the Wye agreement and withdrawal maps, charging that the Palestinians had failed to offer security and other guarantees required by the accord.

But U.S. officials who brokered the agreement and are to monitor its application said this week that the Palestinians had largely met their obligations and called on Israel to take the necessary political decisions to permit implementation.

Israeli officials said the cabinet could meet Wednesday or Thursday to vote on the accord but no final decision had been taken.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was quoted on Israel Radio Tuesday as calling for quick government ratification of the Wye accord.

He said once the withdrawal maps were approved by the cabinet, they would be shown to settlers and only then to the Palestinians.

Jewish settlers and other ultra-nationalists who hold a dominant position in Netanyahu's fragile coalition government have demanded

Palestinians protest confiscation of land

AL KHADER (AP) — Dozens of Palestinians on Tuesday blocked an Israeli bulldozer trying to pave a bypass road for Jewish settlers for which 40 acres of Arab land were confiscated.

About seventy protesters stood in the bulldozer's path while 30 Israeli soldiers tried to negotiate a solution.

After several hours, the Israelis decided to halt work on the road for one week in order to give sides time to resolve the dispute in court.

The new road would serve as both the main entrance to the Jewish settlement of Efrat and as a link to the area's main highway for a nearby Arab village, said Lt. Peter Lerner, spokesman for the Israeli military government in the West Bank.

Lerner said that its construction would include the confiscation of about 150 dunams of land.

Jamila Sallah, 50, wearing a traditional Palestinian black dress with coloured embroidery, stood near the bulldozer and lamented the pending paving of the road.

"They are stealing my land in front of my eyes and I can't do anything about it. But I will stand in front of the bulldozer to stop it. I won't let it pass," said an anguished Sallah. "Only over my dead body would it pass. This is all that I have."

Salah Tamari, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said the road paving violated the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement signed last month in Washington.

As part of the agreement, both sides undertook not to take unilateral steps that would prejudice the outcome of future talks on a permanent peace agreement.

Tamari hailed the decision to bring the issue to court a victory.

"It is a retreat from their [the Israeli] position and it is an accomplishment for the Palestinians."

that the Wye accord be scrapped.

The hardliners claim that the planned pullbacks would isolate a number of settlements in Palestinian-run areas, leaving them vulnerable to attack.

In a bid to prevent land

handovers, settlers in several areas have taken over hilltops near their settlements since the Wye accord was signed.

The army, apparently on instructions from the government, has yet to take any moves against the illegal land grabs.



A painting by Italian artist Luca Signorelli (1470-1523) titled 'The Circumcision,' from 'Signorelli the British Collection,' is displayed at the National Gallery in London on Monday. It is the first exhibition of his work held anywhere in the world for 45 years (AFP photo)

Wife prefers mother to husband

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian woman who filed for divorce on the grounds that the apartment her husband bought was "too far from mother's," was turned down by the court. The Cairo personal-status court ordered Sanaa Ali Mohammad to go with her husband, Mohammad Mustafa Ali, to the apartment he chose as their home. She filed for divorce after her husband decided to buy an apartment in an inexpensive residential district 50 kilometres north of Cairo. She demanded that her husband buy an apartment near her mother's home in Giza. He told the court he could not afford a Giza apartment.

Prescott blasts media prying

LONDON (R) — Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott hit out at the press for prying into politicians' private lives as the best-selling Sun tabloid demanded to know whether Britain was being run by a "gay mafia." Prescott launched his attack after Agriculture Minister Nick Brown was forced to admit he is gay when a former lover tried to sell his story to a Sunday newspaper. "I think it's quite deplorable. They [newspapers] seem to be judge, jury and executioner in this matter. It's totally unacceptable and I think British public opinion's against it also," Prescott told the BBC.

Relaxation of liquor law for millennium revelry

LONDON (R) — Britons may be allowed to celebrate the coming of the new millennium with an unprecedented all-night session in the pub, the government said. The Home Office (interior ministry) said it proposed to relax the tight rules on licensing hours which until now have meant landlords calling "Time" shortly after the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" at midnight on New Year's Eve. One possibility was to allow carousing to continue until four o'clock in the morning; the other to allow pubs to stay open until 11 a.m. — opening time on Jan. 1.

'Zorro' meets Spanish royal couple

MADRID (AFP) — Spanish film actor Antonio Banderas, who plays the dashing masked avenger in the new box-office hit 'The Mask of Zorro,' met Spain's King Juan Carlos and Queen Sophia on Monday night at the Spanish preview of the film. The Andalusian-born actor who has conquered the cinema-going public in the United States, talked to the royal couple at the Palace of Music in Madrid, telling them that funds from the preview would go to a foundation for retired actors.

Thai's reject script charging historical inaccuracy

BANGKOK (AP) — Thai film authorities have all but killed the chance of remaking "Anna and the King of Siam" on location, saying script revisions by 20th Century Fox don't go far enough in changing historical inaccuracies deemed insulting to the Thai monarchy. Thailand's Film Board on Monday stood by a three-week-old judgement that the movie, starring Oscar winner Jodie Foster and Hong Kong star Chow Yun Fat, would offend Thai sensibilities. "Anna and the King" is a remake of the 1946 "Anna and the King of Siam," starring Rex Harrison and Irene Dunne.

Kuwait MPs attack government over arms deals

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwaiti parliamentarians warned the government on Tuesday of a major political crisis over its arms procurement policies, especially a pending deal for American howitzer guns worth around \$600 million.

Several MPs said in a heated debate that parliament would not remain silent while the government concluded arms deals, ignoring parliamentary objections based on reports by official expert teams which inspect and study offers.

Some MPs threatened to question ministers in the National Assembly, or parliament, if the government went ahead with the American deal.

Kuwait's last government resigned in March after similar action against the information minister.

"You want us to participate in the crime and see theft of public funds and remain silent?" liberal MP Abdullah Al Naibari asked the government in parliament.

"It is better for us to stay at home... Please let there be no embarrassment if the National Assembly exercised its constitutional rights," he added.

Several other MPs strongly criticised the government for going ahead with the American Paladin deal which they said failed to meet technical requirements and called

it a "scrap" system.

The most senior government representative present in parliament on Tuesday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, tried to assure critics that the decision to buy Paladins was a sound one.

The deal is for two fully equipped battalions of 52 calibre howitzers. The U.S. army uses 39 calibre Paladins and has not guaranteed the higher calibre gun made by United Defence.

Britain's GEC-Marconi is offering the Desert AS90 while Denel of South Africa is running with its G-6 gun.

The U.S. embassy in Kuwait said on Friday that the United States had secured the deal. Britain said on Monday it was assured by Kuwaitis that no final decision had been taken, but Sheikh Sabah said on Tuesday the contract was signed with the Americans.

Minutes later, Sheikh Sabah said: "If it has been signed or not, I don't know, but the Supreme Defence Council has approved it." He also criticised MP Mubarak Al Duwailah for reading in an open session from official reports which urged the government to disqualify the Paladin, calling them state secrets.

Kurd rebel ambush kills 20 Turkish troops

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Kurdish rebels killed 20 Turkish troops and militia-men in an ambush in southeast Turkey on Tuesday, even as Ankara stepped up its anti-rebel offensive inside northern Iraq.

Fifteen members of the security forces were wounded in the attack by rebels of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in the southeastern province of Sirnak, a military official said.

He told Reuters the ambush took place while troops were carrying out a large anti-rebel operation in the Gabar Mountain area close to the Iraqi border. There were no immediate reports of PKK casualties.

The attack showed that the rebels, fighting a 14-year campaign for self-rule in

Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast, are still capable of striking major blows against the armed forces of the NATO member state.

Turkish forces, meanwhile, poured fresh troops into northern Iraq by helicopter to strike against PKK forces before winter grips the remote mountainous region.

Military officials said around 30,000 troops were now involved in the operation, which began at the weekend, against between 400 and 500 PKK guerrillas.

Turkey says the rebels fled Syria last month to seek shelter in the Kurdish enclave.

Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz said the Iraqi incursion was a limited offensive. "But it will con-

tinue until their roots have been dug up," he told his party MPs.

The United States, Britain and Turkey released a joint statement saying they welcomed a peace deal signed between rival Iraqi Kurd groups in Washington last month.

The three states stressed the need to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity — apparently to reassure Turkey that no Kurdish state would be formed in the area.

Turkey's Iraqi Kurdish ally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Massoud Barzani, is backing the latest offensive with around 5,000 of its "peshmerga" fighters deployed along the border.

"We have been conducting our own operations for a

while. This is just one last combing operation before the winter," said the KDP's Ankara representative, Safwan Dizaeye.

The Turkish state-run Anadolu news agency said the rebels were fleeing Iraq's sovereignty and towards Iran. There was no word of any casualties in the fighting.

The KDP and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of Jalal Talebani have ruled northern Iraq outside Baghdad's control since the end of the 1991 Gulf war.

Baghdad on Monday denounced the operation as "a flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

The offensive comes against the background of rising international tension

over Iraq's decision to halt all cooperation with United Nations weapons inspectors. The United States said on Monday it held out little hope for a diplomatic solution, leaving military force as an increasing possibility.

Ankara says it has all but defeated the PKK. Army officials said the new offensive was a last chance to effectively hit the PKK before harsh weather and heavy snows made the rebels' winter mountain hideouts virtually impenetrable.

"This month was chosen because it was suitable for helicopter flights and military manoeuvrability," an officer told Reuters. Military officials said there had also been intensive clashes with the PKK inside Turkey.

Kuwait constitutional court rejects journalist's defence argument

KUWAIT (AP) — The constitutional court rejected Tuesday a defence argument raised by lawyers for a Kuwaiti editor sentenced to prison for publishing a joke deemed insulting to Islam.

The attorneys for Mohammad Al Saqar, editor of the independent daily Al Qabas, claimed that the 1961 publications law under which he was convicted contradicts the constitution.

In the joke printed in Al Qabas, a teacher asks his stu-

dents: "Why did God kick Adam and Eve out of heaven?" A student answers: "Because they hadn't paid the rent." The case will now go back to the appeals court that will uphold or overturn a June 24 ruling by the Court of First Instance sentencing Al Saqar to six months in jail.

"We were astonished by the ruling of the constitutional court," attorney and human rights activist, Ali Al Baghli, told the Associated Press. An explanation of the ruling was

not available.

He insisted the law "presumed guilt" by stipulating an editor-in-chief is responsible for everything published in the newspaper. The 1962 constitution, however, says individuals cannot be penalised for the wrongdoing of others.

Al Saqar was taken to court by the information ministry after Islamist lawmakers objected to the joke that was contributed by an Egyptian from Cairo who was sentenced in absentia to six months in jail.

Annan seeks Moroccan OK for West Sahara plan

MARRAKESH (R) — U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan held talks with Moroccan officials on Tuesday to get their final approval for his proposals to resolve the Western Sahara dispute.

Annan met King Hassan of Morocco behind closed doors for two hours on Monday night. On Tuesday he met a delegation led by Prime Minister Abdul Rahman Al Yousoufi in Marrakech, 400 kilometres south of the Moroccan capital Rabat.

"We still don't have details on the meeting with the monarch, but Annan is seeking the final approval of the Moroccan government on his settlement plan," U.N. spokesman Hassan Fodha told reporters.

"He got a verbal agreement and he now wants a confirmation before going ahead with his plan," Annan was due to have another meeting with the king on Tuesday evening, officials said.

Marrakech is the third leg of a 10-day North African tour that will also take Annan to Tunisia and Algeria where he will meet leaders of the Polisario Front.

Morocco and the Algeria-based Polisario both claim the phosphate-rich territory in northwest Africa, over which they fought a costly guerrilla war until the late 1980s.

Annan said before leaving Sahara's main city of Laayoune on Monday that U.N. peacekeeping troops stationed in the former Spanish colony since 1991 could not stay indefinitely and urged the rival parties to back his five-point plan to resolve the dispute.

He later told reporters the warning was not an ultimatum and was intended to encourage the two parties to prevent further delays.

Conflict over the 266,000-square kilometres territory is the longest-running dispute involving the United Nations after Cyprus. It has strained relations between Morocco and Algeria.

A referendum was originally scheduled for 1992 to decide whether Western Sahara should be incorporated into Morocco, which controls most of it, or become independent as sought by the Polisario.

But the opposing sides disagree over voting rights for some 65,000 members of three tribal groupings. The vote is now scheduled for December 1999 at the earliest.

Morocco insists they are all eligible to vote, while the Polisario says the referendum should only cover those included in a Spanish census conducted in 1974 and their immediate families.

EU opens formal enlargement talks amid anxiety about Cyprus

BRUSSELS (AP) — Cyprus urged the European Union (EU) Tuesday to push Turkey into helping end the division of the Mediterranean island and not obstruct the EU membership drive of the Greek Cypriots.

Opening formal membership talks with the EU, Cypriot Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides stressed his government's commitment to the "search of a viable and just solution." Reunification of the island communities would also lead to a "substantial improvement" in Greek-Turkish relations, he said.

On Monday, the Dutch, German and French governments issued a declaration

questioning the wisdom of admitting Cyprus unless the Mediterranean island is first reunified.

Kasoulides said the three should have addressed themselves to Turkey which has been criticised for hampering United Nations efforts to reunify Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

The three EU members said the division of Cyprus weighed on the island's membership chances.

Turkey invaded the northern one-third of Cyprus in 1974 and installed a government, backed by 30,000 troops. The government is only recognised by Turkey.

"I wish to reiterate once again that the government of

Cyprus, despite the absence of positive developments and the hardening of the Turkish position... devotes all its powers and exerts all its efforts in search of a viable and just solution," Kasoulides told the EU foreign ministers.

Sources said there was a fear in the EU of importing Greek-Turkish rivalry by admitting Cyprus and that once inside the EU Greek Cypriots — the only government the international community recognises on the island — may hamper reunification and keep Turkish Cypriots out of the union.

Austrian Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schuessel downplayed the statement of the Dutch, German and French

governments saying it remained the formal EU view that Cyprus remained a valid candidate and that membership talks can encourage U.N. reconciliation efforts on the island.

On Tuesday, the EU also began membership talks with five east European nations amid anxiety about the speed of its expansion drive.

After meeting with Kasoulides, the EU foreign ministers met in one-on-one sessions with their colleagues from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Estonia.

These countries are in the lead after preliminary expansion talks that began in March. The EU is not yet beginning

formal membership talks with five other candidates: Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

On Monday, the leaders of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, at a meeting in Oslo, complained the EU moved so slowly it could destabilise the Baltic region.

The EU has set no date for its eastward expansion. But the most successful candidates may well join as early as 2004.

Lithuanian Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius warned of "unnecessary tensions" that could complicate relations with Russia and other neighbours unless the EU accelerated its screening of candidates.

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